This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

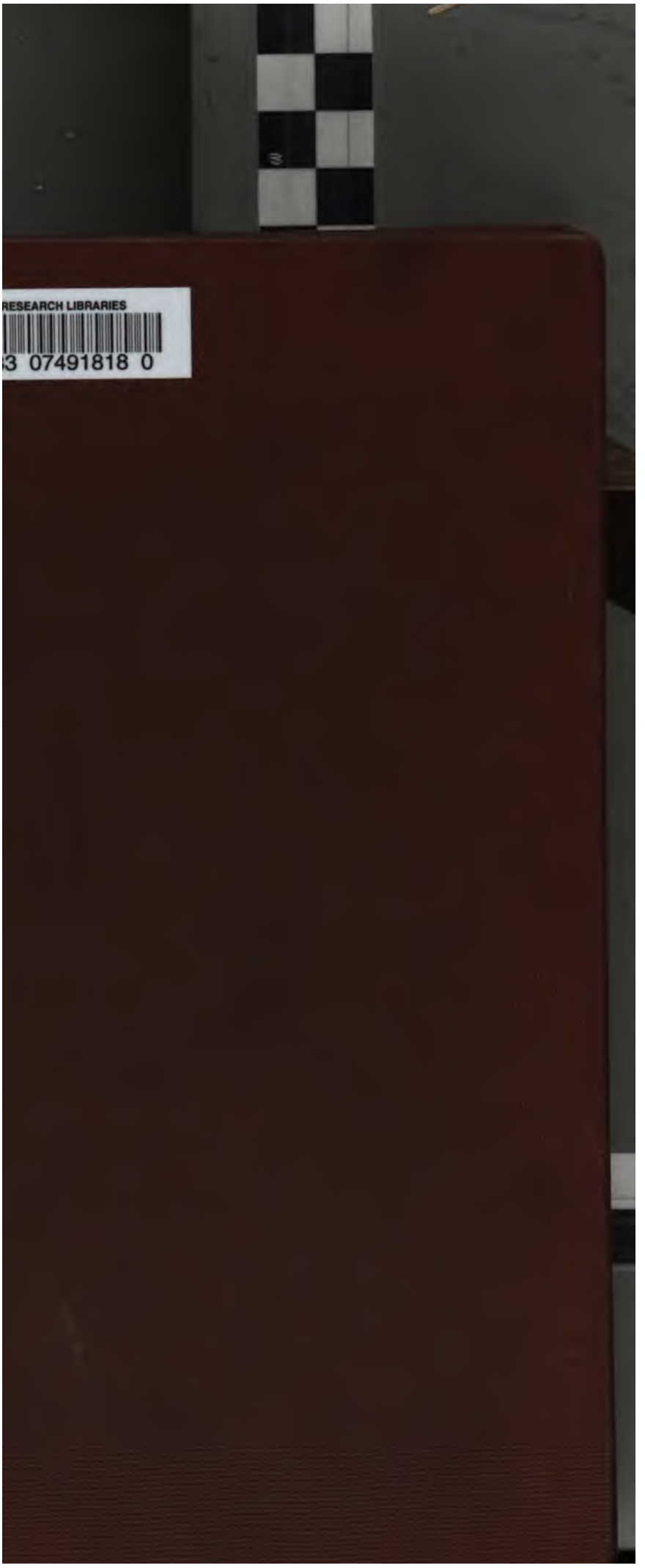
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

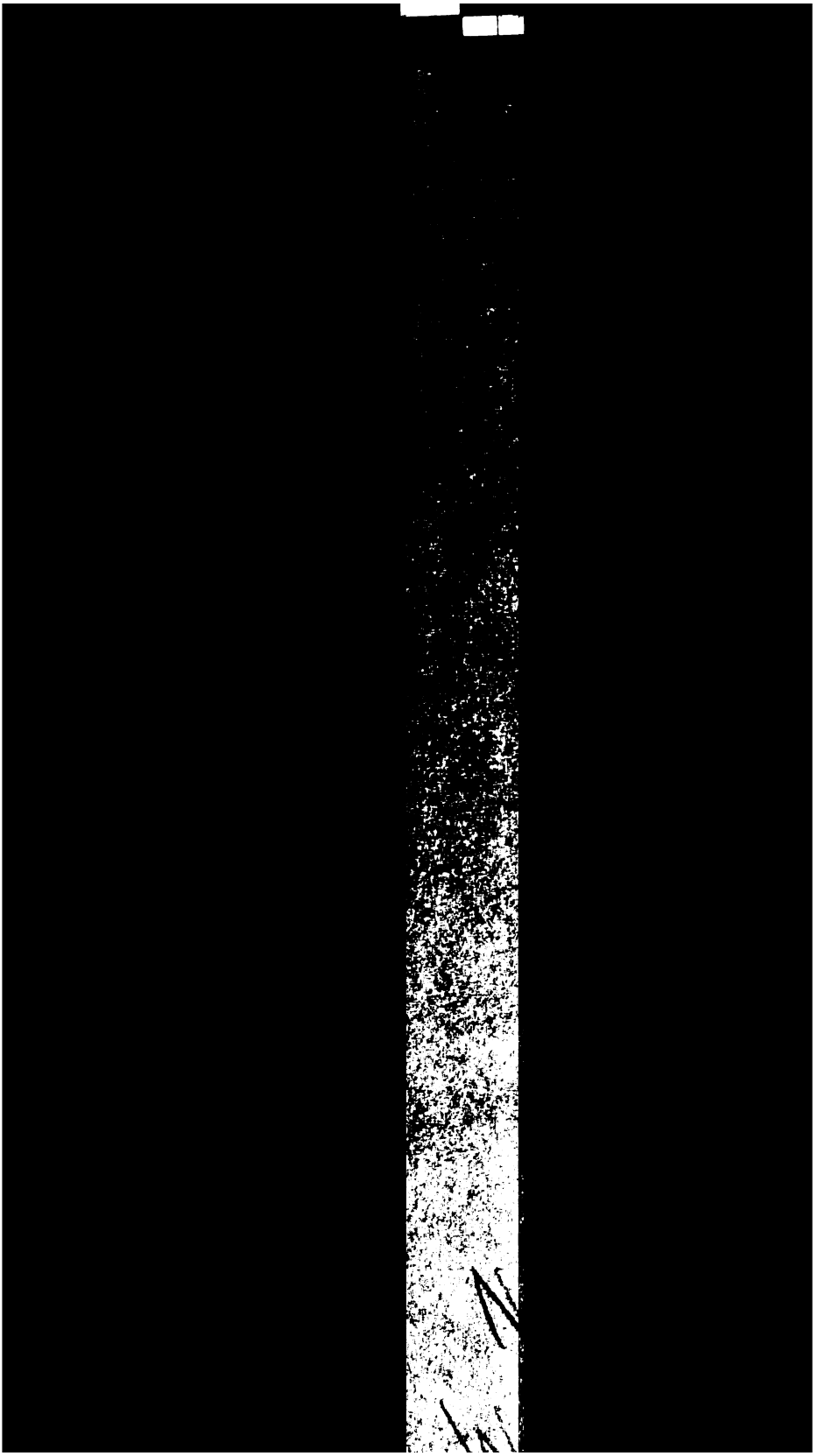
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

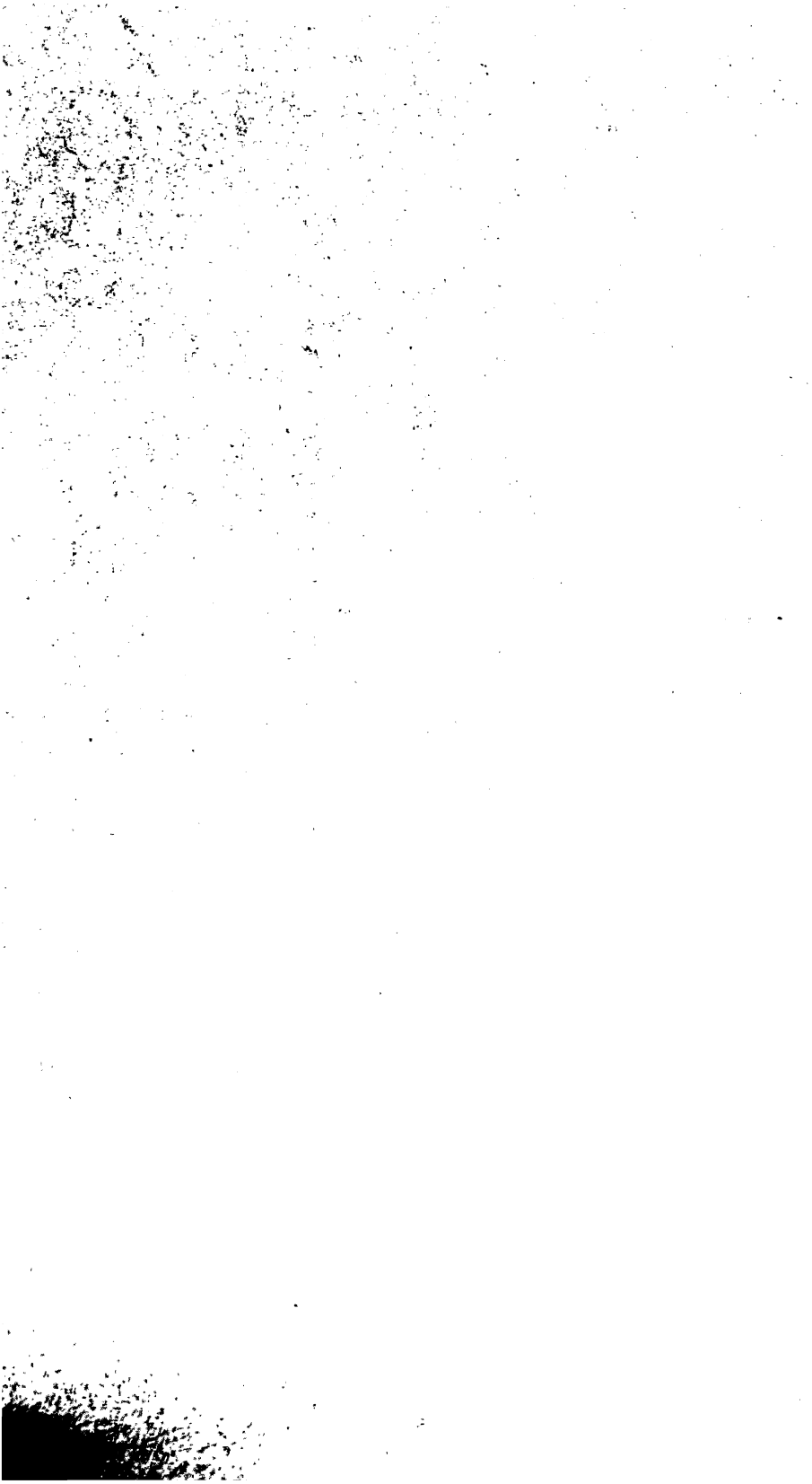
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 07491818 0

George Bancroft





WALPOLE'S UNRIVALLED LETTERS:

THE ONLY COMPLETE EDITION,

TO MATCH WITH

THE CONTINUATION OF THE LETTERS TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Lea & Blanchard have published

THE

LETTERS OF HORACE WALPOLE,

EARL OF ORFORD,

CONTAINING

NEARLY THREE HUNDRED LETTERS,

Now first published from the originals, forming an uninterrupted series, from the year 1735 to 1797; containing his letters to George Montagu, Esq.; Sir Horace Mann; Richard West, Esq.; Lady Craven; Gray (the poet;) Hon. H. Seymour Conway; John Chute, Esq.; Sir David Dalrymple; Rev. William Mason; Lady Hervey; the Earl of Hertford; Richard Bentley, Esq.; Earl of Strafford; Mrs. Hannah More; David Hume, Esq., &c., &c.,

IN FOUR BEAUTIFUL VOLUMES, WITH A PORTRAIT.

"Besides its unrivalled beauty and brilliancy, the collection has the more important merit of being the liveliest picture of manners, and the best epitome of political history that not only this, but any country possesses."—*Quarterly Review.*

"No general collection of the letters of Horace Walpole has ever been made which will at all compare in fulness with the present work."—*North Am. Review.*

"Horace Walpole may decidedly claim pre-eminence for ease and liveliness of expression, terseness of remark, and felicity of narration above almost all the epistolary writers of Great Britain."—*Quarterly Review.*

"Walpole's Letters are full of wit, pleasantry, and information, and written with singular neatness and sprightliness."—*Edinburg Review.*

"One of the most useful and important publications that has issued from the press for the last quarter of a century. It is illustrated with notes, drawn up with consummate tact. Such a work, so enriched with all that is necessary to render it complete, is one of the most valuable that any lover of sterling English literature can possess."—*Sun.*

"As a book of reference, this edition of Walpole's Letters must henceforth take its place among the memoirs and histories of the time. As a book of gossip, it is perhaps the completest work of the kind in the English language."—*The Times.*

"One of the very best works of its class, if not unique, in the English language; a work full of information, full of anecdote, and full of amusement; equally fit for the library of the scholar, the dilettante, the artist, the statesman, and the general reader."—*Literary Gazette.*

"Walpole's Letters are unequalled in our language: delightful in themselves, and a most amusing and instructive commentary on the history of parties, and of the country, from 1735 to 1797."—*Athenæum.*

"It is the only complete edition of the incomparable letters of this 'prince of epistolary writers,' as he has been justly called; and the letters themselves are arranged in chronological order."—*Dublin Evening Mail.*

"Those who have never yet read Horace Walpole's letters—and they must be still in their teens—have much enjoyment before them; those who are familiar with his style, including all who deserve to read, will here renew the pleasure they have so often experienced."—*Morning Herald.*

NOTICE.

The American publishers, in presenting these NEW LETTERS OF HORACE WALPOLE, state that the second volume may be shortly expected, which will complete the series to Sir Horace Mann; and that in bringing them out in this form, it has been their desire that the purchasers of the edition of Walpole's Letters lately issued by them in four volumes, should be able to complete their sets, in a form to match, while, at the same time, those persons who own the earlier Letters to Sir Horace Mann can purchase these volumes separately.

Some notices of the Letters of Walpole that have lately appeared are here appended.

"Horace Walpole will be long known to posterity by his incomparable letters—models as they are of every variety of epistolary excellence. But it is not only for the merits of his style that Walpole's letters are, we think, destined, more surely perhaps than any other work of his or our age, to immortality; it is because these letters are, in fact, a chronicle of every occurrence and of every opinion which attracted or deserved public attention, either at home or abroad, during one of the busiest half centuries of European history. This correspondence is, in fact, a perfect encyclopædia of information from the very best sources—politics from the fountain-head of parties—debates by the best of reporters—foreign affairs from an *habitué* of diplomatic society—sketches of public characters by their intimate acquaintance or associate—the gossip of fashionable life from a man of fashion—literature from a man of letters—the arts from a man of taste—the news of the town from a member of every club in St. James's Street; and all this retailed, by a pen whose vivacity and graphic power is equalled by nothing but the wonderful industry and perseverance with which it was plied through so long a series of years. We used to wonder at the ease and rapidity with which Madame de Sévigné *laissait trotter sa plume;* but Horace Walpole's goes full gallop, and scours the country round, every day in all directions, with a rapidity and vigour quite, we believe, unexampled; and posterity will assuredly know more of the manners, fashions, feelings, factions, parties, politics, private anecdotes, and general history of the latter half of the eighteenth century from Horace Walpole's Letters than from any other source; or, indeed, we believe we may safely say, from all other sources together—all being here combined with so much taste and talent, enlivened by so much pleasantry, tempered with so much sense and shrewdness, that our children may learn in the pages of Walpole to know their great-grandfathers better than their great-grandfathers knew themselves."—*Quarterly Review, Sept.* 1843.

"Horace Walpole is better appreciated now than in his own days. Then, indeed, Conway, and Chute, and Montagu, and Mann, and the 'dear blind old woman,' Du Deffand, might be aware of his warmth as well as his wit. But the world at large did not know him. Sound heart, clear head, brilliant fancy, and substantial knowledge are now, however, awarded to him without much dispute; and the volumes before us are sure of being greeted with respect by thinkers and social philosophers, where their predecessors were at first but welcomed as contributions to the idle man's unprofitable stores of amusement. These letters are like the Sibylline leaves, precious as being the last."—*Athenæum.*

"If the character and talents of Horace Walpole had not been fully revealed by preceding publications, these delightful letters would have exhibited the whole man in a light not to be mistaken. This Correspondence heaps proof upon proof of the excellency of his heart and the wit of his head. The warmth and permanency of his friendships, his intimate perceptions of human nature, and his clear views of public affairs are conspicuously illustrated in the volumes before us. Need we add, that this is one of the most pleasant of pleasant books."—*Literary Gazette.*

L. & B. will publish Memoirs of the Reign of GEORGE the THIRD by HORACE WALPOLE, edited, with notes, by Sir Dennis Le Marchant, Bart., in one volume.

LETTERS

OF

HORACE WALPOLE,

EARL OF ORFORD,

TO

SIR HORACE MANN,

HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S RESIDENT AT THE COURT OF FLORENCE, FROM 1760 TO 1785.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINAL MSS.

CONCLUDING SERIES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PUBLIC LIBRARY

PHILADELPHIA:
LEA & BLANCHARD.
1844.

LENOX LIBRARY
NEW YORK

NEW YORK
PUBLIC

GRIGGS & CO., PRINTERS.

PREFACE.

"These letters, written by the celebrated Horace Walpole, complete his correspondence with Sir Horace Mann, a portion of which was published by Lord Dover, in 1837. It was believed that the immediate descendants of the subjects of some of Walpole's racy anecdotes might be pained by their early publication, and the wit of the dead was reserved *until it could appear without pain to the living*. That period having now arrived, the Earl of Euston, surviving executor of the late Earl of Waldegrave, has placed the whole of Walpole's unpublished Manuscripts, including his Letters, Memoirs, Private Journals, &c., in the hands of Mr. Bentley."*

* The London publisher of these volumes.

The Editor thinks it necessary to state, that the Notes to the following Letters are all by Horace Walpole himself, except those otherwise indicated.

LONDON, JUNE 26th, 1843.

LETTERS

FROM

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

TO

SIR HORACE MANN.

LETTER I.

Strawbury Hill, Nov. 1, 1760.

As I suppose your curiosity about the new reign is not lessened by being at such a distance, I am, you see, prompt in satisfying it, and I can do it in few words. It set out with great show of alteration; it soon settled into the old channel. The favourite* appeared sole minister for a day or two. The old ministers agreed to continue as they were; and though the Duke of Newcastle attempted to pretend to have a mind of retiring, he soon recollected that he had no such inclination. Mr. Pitt† on Thursday acquainted the King that he was content to manage the war, and wished to act in other things as he had done under the Duke of Newcastle in the late reign; the City have expressed the same advice; the duke signified his acquiescence yesterday; and thus only the superficies of the drawing-room is altered, not the government. The household will probably not be settled till after the burial. The young King, you may trust me, who am not apt to be enamoured with royalty, gives all the indication imaginable of being amiable. His person is tall, and full of dignity; his countenance florid and good-natured; his manner graceful and obliging: he expresses no warmth nor resentment against any body; at most, coldness. To the Duke of Cumberland

* John Stewart, Earl of Bute.

† Afterwards the celebrated Earl of Chatham.—Ed.

he has shown even a delicacy of attention. He told him, he intended to introduce a new custom into his family, that of living well with all his family; and he would not permit any body but the princess to be named in the prayers, because the Duke of Cumberland must have been put back for the Duke of York. This is a nature that your own is suited to represent; you will now act in character.

I will tell you something,—the King loves medals; if you ever meet with any thing very curious in that way, I should think you would make your court agreeably by sending it to him. I imagine his taste goes to antiques too, perhaps to pictures, but that I have not heard. If you learn that any purchases may be made in either kind, and that are beyond your own purse, you may acquaint him through the Secretary of State. I should like to have you make yourself necessary to him in his pleasures, as they are so reputable.

The Lord Mayor laid the first stone of the new bridge* yesterday. There is an inscription on it in honour of Mr. Pitt, which has a very Roman air, though very unclassically† expressed; they talk of the contagion of his public spirit. I believe they had not got rid of their panic about mad dogs.

The King's will was opened last night. He has given fifty thousand pounds between the Duke, Princess Amelie, and the Princess of Hesse.‡ The duke, it is said, has relinquished his share. The interest of the whole is to be paid to the two Princesses for their lives, and the survivor is to have the principal. A strong box, containing about ten thousand pounds, is left to Lady Yarmouth. But there is besides an unrevoked deed, dated soon after the battle of Culloden, by which he has given the greatest part of his jewels, which are very fine, to the duke, and about a hundred and four-score thousand pounds. Unluckily, the chief part of this sum is upon mortgages in Germany; consequently, German and French armies are executors. What more was laid out thus, or remains, I know not—I cannot believe in this apparent poverty. It is pretended that the present war exhausted all his savings; I was going to say, credat Judæus—but a Jew is the last man alive who would believe so.

Don't say I have not announced to you the Duchess of Hamilton, and her husband General Campbell,§ Lady Ailesbury's brother. I have mentioned them to you already. They set out this week. I think the duchess will not answer your expectation. She never was so handsome as Lady Coventry, and now is a skeleton. It is hard upon a standard beauty, when she travels in a deep consumption. Poor Lady Coventry concluded her short race with the same attention to her looks. She lay constantly on a couch, with a pocket-glass in her hand; and when that told her how great the change

* Blackfriars Bridge.—Ed.

† That inscription was exceedingly ridiculed, particularly in a pamphlet written on purpose.

‡ Mary, the King's fourth daughter.

§ John, afterwards Duke of Argyll, father to the present duke.—Ed.

was, she took to her bed the last fortnight, had no light in her room but the lamp of a tea-kettle, and at last took things in through the curtains of her bed, without suffering them to be undrawn. The mob, who never quitted curiosity about her, went, to the number of ten thousand, only to see her coffin. If she had lived to ninety like Helen, I believe they would have thought that her wrinkles deserved an epic poem. Poor thing! how far from ninety! she was not eight and twenty! Adieu!

LETTER II.

Arlington Street, Nov. 14, 1760.

I AM vexed, for I find that the first pacquet-boat that sailed after the death of the King, was taken by the French, and the mail thrown overboard. Some of the parcels were cast on shore, but I don't know whether they were legible, or whether the letter I had written to you was among them, and is got to you. It must be very irksome to you not to hear from me on that occasion; and it is particularly so to me, as I had given you all the satisfaction imaginable that you would be safe. This is of much more consequence than the particulars of the news. I repeat it now, but I cannot bear to think that you feel any anxiety so long. Every thing remains so much in the same situation, that there is no probability of your being removed. I have since given you a hint of purchasing medals, antiquities, or pictures for the King. I would give much to be sure those letters had reached you. Then, there is a little somebody of a German prince, through whose acre the post-road lies, and who has quarrelled with the Dutch about a halfpenny-worth of postage; if he has stopped my letters, I shall wish that some frow may have emptied her pail and drowned his dominions! There is a murmur of Mr. Mackenzie* being Vice-chamberlain,—I trust you have been very well with him; I am so connected† with the Campbells that I can increase it. Why should not you write to him to offer your services for any commissions in virtù that the King may be pleased to give.

Lord Huntingdon‡ remains Master of the Horse; nothing else is decided yet. The change in the household, and those few, will constitute almost all the revolution. The King seems the most amiable young man in the world; you may trust me, who am not apt to be the Humorous Lieutenant§ and fall in love with his Majesty.

We are all in guns and bonfires for an unexpected victory of the

* James Stewart Mackenzie, brother of Lord Bute.

† Not only Lady Ailesbury was a Campbell, but Eliz. Mackenzie was a Campbell, and Lady Strafford, wife of the Earl of Strafford, one of Mr. Walpole's particular friends.

‡ Francis Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon.

§ A play of Beaumont and Fletcher.

King of Prussia over Daun;* but as no particulars are yet arrived, there are doubters. The courier comes so exactly in cadence with the intended meeting of the Parliament, having set out before the late King's death could be known, that some people are disposed to believe it is a despatch to the city, which he meant to take by surprise sooner than he will Dresden.

I make this a short letter, for I could only repeat the contents of my last two, which I have forgot, and which I will flatter myself you have received. Adieu!

LETTER III.

Arlington Street, Dec. 5th, 1760.

I HAVE received the samples of the brocadella, but they are so small that I cannot form any judgment of the pattern. I will beg you to follow your own method, and send me some pieces by the first person that will bring them; but they must be of three colours. I am sure I remember such at Florence, particularly at Madame Rinuncini's or Madame Ricardi's, I think the former's; it was in a bed-chamber where she saw company when she was with child. Of two colours they make them here very well, but they cannot arrive at three. I do not approve damask at all, for as there will be no pictures in the chamber, nothing is more *triste* than a single colour.

Don't think I took ill your giving away my books: I had really forgotten them; you shall certainly have another set, and one for Lady Mary Wortley,† who scolded me by Stosch. I shall send you a curious pamphlet, the only work I almost ever knew that changed the opinions of many. It is called "Considerations on the present German War," and is written by a wholesale woollen-draper;‡ but the materials are supposed to be furnished by the faction of the Yorke's. The confirmation of the King of Prussia's victory near Torgau does not prevent the disciples of the pamphlet from thinking that the best thing which could happen for us would be to have that monarch's head shot off. There are letters from the Hague, that say Daun is dead of his wounds. If he is, I shall begin to believe that the King of Prussia will end successfully at last. It has been the fashion to cry down Daun; but, as much as the King of Prussia may admire himself, I dare say he would have been glad to be matched with one much more like himself than one so opposite as the marshal.

I have heard nothing lately of Stosch, and am told he has been ill at Salisbury. This climate is apt to try foreign constitutions. Elisi,§

* The battle of Torgau.—ED.

† Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who was then in Italy.

‡ Isaac Mauduit.

§ Philip Elisi, an Italian, who performed at the Opera in London, in 1760 and 1761. Though a very fine singer, Elisi was still more eminent as an actor.—ED.

the first singer, cannot get rid of a fever, and has not appeared yet. The comic Opera pleases extremely; the woman Paganina* has more applause than I almost ever remember; every song she sings is encored.

I have little to tell you more of the new reign. The King is good and amiable in every thing he does, and seems to have no view but of contenting all the world; but that is not just the most attainable point. I will tell you a bon-mot of a Mrs. Hardinge, a physician's wife—and a bon-mot very often paints truly the history or manners of the times. She says, it is a great question what the king is to burn in his chamber, whether Scotch-coal,† Newcastle-coal or Pitt-coal. The Bed-chamber, I was going to say, is settled, but there are additions made to it every day; there are already twenty Lords and seventeen Grooms. To the King's own set are added all the late King's, but Lord Hyndford, Lord Essex, the Duke of Manchester, and Lord Falconberg; added, are the Duke of Richmond, Lord Weymouth, Lord March‡ and Lord Eglinton: and, since that, two Tory Lords, Oxford and Bruce. General Campbell, Mr. Nassau, and Mr. Clavering are omitted; Mr. Compton, and I forgot who, are new Grooms, with three Tories, Norbonne Berkeley, George Pitt, whom you remember, and Northey. Worsely§ is made Master of the Board of Works; he was this King's Equerry, and passes for having a taste for architecture, of which I told you the King was fond. Lord Rochford is amply indemnified by a pension on Ireland of two thousand a-year. Of a Queen, the talk is dropped; and no other changes are likely to be made yet. We have already been in danger of losing this charming young King; his horse threw him the day before yesterday, and bruised his head and shoulder; with difficulty they made him be blooded. He immediately wrote to the Princess that she might not be frightened, and was well enough to go to the play at night.

Thank you for your kindness to Mr. Strange;‖ if he still persists in his principles, he will be strangely unfashionable at his return. I, who could make great allowances in the last reign, cannot forgive any body being a Jacobite now.

As you have a print of my eagle,¶ I will be obliged to you if you will employ any body at Rome to pick me up an altar as like to the pedestal of the eagle as they can. I don't insist upon an exact resemblance; but should like it to be pretty much of the same height and

* Though the Paganina did not appear in this country till she was about forty years old, she speedily became the rage by her graceful acting, the splendour of her voice, her perfect intonation, and her exquisite taste in singing.—Ed.

† Alluding to Lord Bute, the Duke of Newcastle, and Mr. Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham.

‡ Afterwards the well-known Duke of Queensbury.—Ed.

§ —Worsely, Esq., of Hovingham, in Yorkshire.

‖ The eminent engraver, afterwards Sir Robert Strange.—Ed.

¶ A magnificent piece of sculpture found in 1742, in the precincts of the baths of Caracalla. It has been spoken of as one of the finest specimens of Greek sculpture in the world. At the dispersion of Walpole's curiosities, in 1842, this antique was purchased by the Earl of Leicester.—Ed.

size: it is for my Vespasian,* which is to answer the eagle in a recess in my approaching gallery. Adieu!

P.S. The Secret Expedition† is beating about off Portsmouth.

LETTER IV.

Arlington Street, Jan. 2nd, 1761.

I NEVER was so rich in letters from you before; I have received four pacquets at once this morning—there had been thirteen mails due. It is supposed that the pacquet-boats were afraid of French privateers, who swarmed about the Dutch coast, believing that the late King's jewels were coming over. I have not yet received the letter by Prince San-Severino's‡ courier; but as you mention the fans in a subsequent despatch, I shall immediately provide them; but, as the pacquets have been detained so long, I fear any courier to Mr. Mackenzie must be departed some time: I shall send them by sea, with the books I promised you.

With regard to enlarged credentials, I cannot think this a likely time to obtain them. You yourself hold the compliment paid to the Emperor extraordinary; undoubtedly they would not make that civility greater. Should he send a minister in form, I should be glad if increasing your dignity would be thought a sufficient return; but, in my own opinion, the peace will be the best season for pushing your request. When that will arrive, God knows! or who will be the person to whom application must be then made. Quiet as things are at present, no man living expects or believes that they can continue so. Three separate ministers and their factions cannot hold together in a more phlegmatic country than this. The preferment of some Tories had already like to have overset the system; and, though Lord Bute avoids preferring his countrymen more sedulously than it was supposed he would try to prefer them, the clamour is still unreasonably great, nor can all his caution or the King's benignity satisfy.

With regard to foreign affairs, I beg you to be cautious. Stick to your orders, and give no opinion: make no declaration of the King's intentions farther than you are authorized by Mr. Pitt's directions. He is too much a man of honour not to support you, if you act by his instructions; but don't exceed them. The German war is not so popular as you imagine, either in the closet or in the nation. Mystery, the wisdom of blockheads, may be allowable in a foreign minister; use it till you see farther. If I have any sagacity, such times are coming as will make people glad to have nothing to unsay. Judge

* A bust of Vespasian in basalt. This and the eagle were placed in the grand gallery at Strawberry Hill.—ED.

† A large armament. After being detained many months at Portsmouth, the forces were dispersed, and the design was abandoned.—ED.

‡ The Neapolitan minister.

of my affection for you, when a nature, as open as mine, prescribes reserve; but I wish your fortune to be firm, whatever happens. At present, there is no kind of news—every body is in the country for the holidays. The laying aside of the expedition gave universal pleasure; as France had had so much time to be upon its guard, and the season is so far advanced and so tempestuous.

We have lost poor Lord Downe,* one of the most amiable men in the world. Frank, generous, spirited, and odd, with a large independent fortune, he had conceived a rage for the army. He received twelve wounds in the affair of Campen; and, though one of them was in his knee, he was forced to walk five miles. This last wound was neglected, and closed too soon, with a splinter in it, not being thought of consequence; and proved mortal. ' He bid the surgeons put him to as much pain as they pleased, so they did but make him fit for the next campaign. He languished ten weeks; and not a mouth is opened but in praise or regret of him.

I question a little whether you will see the Duchess of Hamilton; these mails have brought so good an account of her that, unless she grows worse, they will scarce pass Lyons, where they are established for the winter. I never heard of that Lord Archibald Hamilton;† he would pass his time ill with General Campbell, who is not at all of a humour to suffer any impertinence to his wife.

Thank you much for the seeds; in return, behold a new commission, but, I trust, not a troublesome one. A friend of mine, Mr. Hawkins,‡ is writing the history of music; the sooner you could send us the following books the better; if by any English traveller, we should be glad.

1. Tutte le Opere di Giuseppe Zarlino. Venezia, 1589; 2 vols. folio.

2. History of Music, in Italian, by Gio. Andr. Angelini Bontempi. 1695, folio.

3. Dialogo della Musica antica e moderna, di Vincenzo Galilei. Folio; 1602, or 1541, in Firenze.

4. Musica vaga ed artifiziosa di Romano Michieli. Folio; 1615, Venezia.

5. Osservazioni di ben regolare il Coro della Capella Pontificizia, fatte da Andrea Adami. Quarto, 1714; in Roma.

Any other books of character on the subject will be very acceptable; but, when I review the list and see so many thundering folios, I don't expect that any gentleman will bring them in his breeches-pocket, or even in his cloak-bag.

Pray, is there any print of the Cardinal of York?§ If there is do send me one.

Adieu, my good child!

* H. Pleydell Dawes, Viscount Downe.

† Sir H. Mann did not know that he was half-brother of the late Duke of Hamilton.

‡ Afterwards Sir John Hawkins. His history was published in five volumes quarto.

§ Younger brother of Prince Charles Edward, and after his death called, by the remaining adherents to his family, Henry IX.

LETTER V.

Arlington Street, Jan. 27, 1761.

I SHOULD like Marshal Botta's* furniture, which you describe, if my tenure in Strawberry were as transitory as a Florentine commander's; but, in a castle built for eternity, and founded in the most flourishing age of the greatest republic now in the world, which has extended its empire into every quarter of the globe, can I think of a peach-coloured ground, which will fade like the bloom on Chloe's cheek? There's a pompous paragraph! A Grecian or a Roman would have written it seriously, and with even more slender pretensions. However, though my castle is built of paper, and though our empire should vanish as rapidly as it has advanced, I still object to peach-colour—not only from its fading hue, but for wanting the solemnity becoming a Gothic edifice: I must not have a round tower dressed in a pet-en-l'air. I would as soon put rouge and patches on a statue of St. Ethelburgh. You must not wonder at my remembering Rinuncini's hangings at the distance of nineteen or twenty years: my memory is exceedingly retentive of trifles. There is no hurry: I can wait till you send me patterns, and an account of that triple-coloured contexture, for which, in gratitude to my memory, I still have a hankering. Three years ago I had the ceiling of my china-room painted, from one I had observed in the little Borghese villa. I was hoarding ideas for a future Strawberry even in those days of giddiness, when I seemed to attend to nothing. The altar of the eagle is three feet two inches and a half high, by one foot eight inches wide. If that for the Vespasian should be a trifle larger, especially a little higher, it would carry so large a bust better; but I imagine the race of altar-tombs are pretty much of the same dimensions.

So much for myself—sure it is time to come to you. Mr. Mackensie, by the King's own order and thought, was immediately named Plenipotentiary. I fear you have not exactly the same pretensions; however, as I think, services will be pretensions in this reign, the precedent I hope will not hurt you. The peace seems the proper period for asking it.

I have delivered to your brother the famous pamphlet; two sets of the Royal and Noble Authors for yourself and Lady Mary Wortley; a Lucan, printed at Strawberry, which, I trust, you will think a handsome edition; and six of the newest-fashioned and prettiest fans I could find—they are really genteel, though one or two have caprices that will turn a Florentine head. They were so dear, that I shall never tell you the price; I was glad to begin to pay some of the debts I owe you in commissions. All these will depart by the first opportunity; but the set for the Lady Mary will, I suppose, arrive too late,

* Commander of the troops in Tuscany for the Emperor Francis.

as her husband is dead, and she now will probably return to England. I pity Lady Bute :* her mother will sell to whoever does not know her, all kinds of promises and reversions, bestow lies gratis and wholesale, and make so much mischief, that they will be forced to discard her in three months, and that will go to my Lady Bute's heart, who is one of the best and most sensible women in the world; and who, educated by such a mother, or rather with no education, has never made a false step. Old Avidien,† the father is dead, worth half a million. To his son,‡ on whom six hundred a-year was settled, the reversion of which he has sold, he gives 1000*l.* a-year for life, but not to descend to any children he may have by any of his many wives. To Lady Mary, in lieu of dower, but which to be sure she will not accept, instead of the thirds of such a fortune, 1200*l.* a-year; and after her to their son for life; and then the 1200*l.* and the 1000*l.* to Lady Bute and to her second son; with 2000*l.* to each of her younger children; all the rest, in present, to Lady Bute, then to her second son, taking the name of Wortley, and in succession to all the rest of her children, which are numerous; and after them to Lord Sandwich, to whom, in present, he leaves about 4000*l.* The son, you perceive is not so well treated by his own father as his companion Taaffe§ is by the French court, where he lives, and is received on the best footing. So near is fort l'Evesque to Versailles, Admiral Forbes told me yesterday, that in one of Lady Mary's jaunts to or from Genoa, she begged a passage of Commodore Barnard. A storm threatening, he prepared her for it, but assured her there was no danger. She said she was not afraid, and, going into a part of the gallery not much adapted to heroism, she wrote these lines on the side:

> Mistaken seaman, mark my dauntless mind,
> Who, wreck'd on shore, am fearless of the wind.

On landing, this magnanimous dame desired the commander to accept a ring: he wore it as a fine emerald, but being over-persuaded to have it unset before his face, it proved a bit of glass.

News we have of no sort—Ireland seems to be preparing the first we shall receive. The *good* Primate‖ has conjured up a storm, in which, I believe, he will not employ the archiepiscopal gift of exorcism. Adieu!

* Mary Countess of Bute, only daughter of Lady Mary Wortley.

† Edward Wortley Montague, husband of Lady Mary. Both were remarkably avaricious, and are satirized by Pope in one of his Imitations of Horace, under the names of *Avidien and his Wife*.

‡ Edward Wortley Montagu, jun., their only son, whose adventures deserve better to be known than his own writings.

§ Theobald Taaffe, an Irish adventurer, was, with his associate, Wortley Montagu, imprisoned in Fort l'Evêque at Paris, for cheating and robbing a person with whom they had gamed.

‖ Dr. Stone, Archbishop of Armagh.

LETTER VI.

Arlington Street, March 3, 1761.

WELL, are not you peevish that the new reign leaves our correspondence more languid than the old? In all February not an event worth packing up and sending to you! Neither changes, nor honours, nor squabbles yet. Lord Bute obliges every body he can, and people seem extremely willing to be obliged. Mr. Pitt is laid up with a dreadful gout in all his limbs; he did not sleep for fourteen nights, till one of his eyes grew as bad as his hands or feet. He begins to mend.

Whatever mysteries or clouds there are, will probably develope themselves as soon as the elections are over, and the Parliament fixed, which now engrosses all conversation and all purses; for the expense is incredible. West Indians, conquerors, nabobs, and admirals, attack every borough; there are no fewer than nine candidates at Andover. The change in a Parliament used to be computed at between sixty and seventy; now it is believed there will be a hundred and fifty new members. Corruption now stands upon its own legs—no money is issued from the Treasury; there are no parties, no pretence of grievances, and yet venality is grosser than ever! The borough of Sudbury has gone so far as to advertise for a chapman! We have been as victorious as the Romans, and are as corrupt: I don't know how soon the prætorian militia will set the empire to sale. Sir Nathaniel Curzon* has struck a very novel stroke; advertising that the King intended to make him a peer; and, therefore, recommending his brother to the county of Derby for the same *independent* principles with himself. He takes a peerage to prove his independence, and recommends his brother to the opposition to prove his gratitude!

Ireland is settled for the present; the Duke of Bedford relinquishes it, with some emoluments, to his court. Lord Kildare's neutrality is rewarded with a marquisate—he has been prevailed upon to retain the oldest title in Europe, instead of Leinster, which he had a mind to take.† Lord Temple‡ has refused that island, very unwillingly, I believe, or very fearfully; but Mr. Pitt was positive, having nobody else in the House of Lords—and what is such only one? Some who are tolerably shrewed, think this indicates more, and that Mr. Pitt would not let Lord Temple engage in Ireland, when he himself may be thinking of quitting in England. Lord Halifax,§ I believe, will be Lord-Lieutenant.

Mr. Conway is going to Germany, to his great contentment, as his character is vindicated at last. It may show he deserved to lose no

* Created Baron Scarsdale.
† And which he afterwards took, with a dukedom.
‡ Richard Grenville, first Earl Temple.
§ George Montagu, last Earl of Halifax.

glory, but the ensuing campaign does not open much prospect of his gaining any.

The new peerages will soon be declared. Legge* is not of the number; and yet has had an intimation to resign, being extremely out of favour in the new court, where he had been so well, and which he had officiously contrived to disoblige very late in the day. Lord Barrington will be Chancellor of the Exchequer; Charles Townshend Secretary at War; and Lord Talbot, who is to be an earl, and is much a favourite, will succeed Lord Halifax in the Board of Trade.

Voltaire has been charmingly absurd. He who laughed at Congreve for despising the rank of author and affecting the gentleman, set out post for a hovel he has in France, to write from thence, and style himself *Gentleman of the Bed-chamber* to Lord Lyttelton, who, in his Dialogues of the Dead, had called him an exile. He writes in English, and not a sentence is tolerable English. The answer is very civil and sensible.

There has been a droll print:† her Mistress reproving Miss Chudleigh‡ for her train of life. She replies, "Madame, chacun a son *But.*"

Pray, is there a print of the Cardinal of York, or any medal of him? If there is, do be so good to send them to me. Adieu!

LETTER VII.

Arlington Street, March, 17, 1761.

You will have no reason to complain now that there is a barrenness of events. Here are changes enough to amount to a revolution, though it is all so gilded and crowned that you can scarce meet a face that is not triumphant. On Friday last it was notified pretty abruptly to Lord Holderness that he must quit the Seals, which the King thought proper to give to Lord Bute. This measure was as great a secret as it was sudden. Mr. Pitt heard it as late as his colleague himself. To soften, however, the disagreeableness of his not being consulted, and whatever else might be unpleasant to him in the measure, Mr. Pitt was acquainted that the King bestowed the Cofferer's place on Mr. James Grenville, and would restore the department of the West Indies, which had been disjoined to accommodate Lord Halifax, to the Secretary of State. As Mr. Pitt's passion is not the disposal of places, and as he has no dependants on whom to bestow them, this feather is not likely to make him amends for the loss of his helmet, which it is supposed Lord Bute intends to make useless; and, as he

* Henry Bilson Legge, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

† The Princess Dowager.

‡ The famous Elizabeth Chudleigh, Maid of Honour, afterwards Duchess of Kingston and Countess of Bristol.

has hitherto behaved with singular moderation, it is believed that his taking the Seals in so particular a juncture was determined by the prospect of his being able to make a popular peace, France having made the most pressing offers. Nothing else, I think, could justify Lord Bute to himself for the imprudence of this step, which renders him the responsible minister, and exposes him to all the danger attendant on such a situation. As Groom of the Stole, he had all the credit of favourite without the hazard. The world does not attribute much kindness to the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Hardwicke, who advised him to this measure.

Lord Halifax goes to Ireland;* Lord Sandys succeeds him in the Board of Trade, which is reduced to its old insignificance; and the additional thousand pounds a-year granted to Lord Halifax are turned over to the Duke of Leeds, who is forced to quit the Cofferer's place to James Granville, and to return to his old post of Justice in Eyre, which Lord Sandys had;—but to break the fall, the Duke is made Cabinet Councellor, a rank that will soon become indistinct from Privy Councellor by growing as numerous. You will ask what becomes of Lord Holderness;—truly, he is no unlucky man. For a day or two he was to be Groom of the Stole, with an addition of 1000*l.* a year,—at last he has the reversion of the Cinque Ports for life, after the Duke of Dorset, who is extremely infirm.

When you have digested all this in your head—Have you? I shall open a new vein of surprise,—a new favourite! Lord Talbot is made an Earl, and his son-in-law, Rice, a Lord of Trade;—stay, this is nothing: the new earl is made Lord Steward too! To pave his way, Lord Huntingdon is removed to Groom of the Stole, and the Duke of Rutland to Master of the Horse;—you see great Dukes are not immoveable as rocks. The comments on this extraordinary promotion are a little licentious, but, as I am not commentator enough to wrap them up in Latin, I shall leave them to future expounders; and the rest of the changes, which have less mystery, I shall reduce to a catalogue.

Legge, turned out from Chancellor of the Exchequer; succeeded by Lord Barrington, Secretary at War; he by Charles Townsend, Treasurer of the Chambers; and he by Sir Francis Dashwood, at the solicitation of Lord Westmorland. Mr. Elliot succeeds James Grenville in the Treasury. Lord Villiers and your friend T. Pelham, Lords of the Admiralty. Rice, John Yorke, and Sir Edm. Thomas, Lords of Trade. The new Peers, *Earl* Talbot and *Earl* of Delawar; Mr. Spencer, *Lord* Viscount Spencer; Sir Richard Grosvenor, a Viscount or Baron, I don't know which, nor does he, for yesterday, when he should have kissed hands, he was gone to Newmarket, to see the trial of a race-horse. Doddington, Lord Melcombe;

* When Lord Halifax was made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he was accompanied by Gerard Hamilton, as chief Secretary. This gentleman (well known as the associate of Dr. Johnson and his literary circle, as well as by the sobriquet "Single-speech Hamilton,") was not appointed to that office by Lord Halifax, but by his own political friends.—Ed.

Sir Thomas Robinson, Lord Grantham; Sir William Irby, Lord Boston; Sir Nathaniel Curzon, Lord Scarsdale; and Lady Bute, Lady Mount Stewart of Wortley. This is a sensible way of giving the English Peerage to her family regularly, and approved by all the world, both from her vast property, and particular merit, which is not at all diminished by the torrent of her fortune. Lord Carpenter is made earl of Tirconnel, in Ireland; and a Mr. Turner, a Lord* there. The next shower is to rain red ribands, but those I suppose you are in no hurry to learn.

The Parliament rises in two days. Mr. Onslow quits the chair and the House; George Grenville is to be Speaker.

You will not wonder that in a scene so busy and amusing, I should be less inquisitive about the Jesuitical war at Rome. The truth is, I knew nothing of it, nor do we think more of Rome here than of a squabble among the canons of Liege or Cologn. However, I am much obliged to you for your accounts, and beg you will repay my anecdotes with the continuation of them. If Pasquin should reflect on any Signora Rezzonica for recommending a Major Domo† to his Holiness, pray send me his epigram.

If our political campaign should end here, and our German one where it is, we still are not likely to want warfare. The colliers in Northumberland are in open hostilities with the militia, and in the last battle at Hexham the militia lost an officer and three men, and the colliers one and-twenty. If this engagement, and a peace abroad, had happened in the late reign, I suppose Prince Ferdinand would have had another pension on Ireland for coming over to quell the colliers. Adieu!

LETTER VIII.

Arlington Street, April 10, 1761.

Well, I have received my Cousin Boothby and the pacquet. Thank you for the trouble you have given yourself; but, another time, I will trust my memory rather than my taste. Rinuncini's brocadella is frightful; how could I treasure up an idea of any thing that consisted of such a horrid assemblage as green and yellow? Those that have red, green and white, are very pretty, and as soon as I can determine the quantity I shall want, I will take the liberty of employing you for the manufacture. The gallery advances by large strides, and when that is complete, I shall furnish the Round Tower. My cousin Boothby‡ is my cousin; my mother and his were first cousins; but his, happening not to be the most amiable person in the world, we have had so little connexion, that it was perfectly nothing at all.

* Lord Winterton.

† The name of the then pope was Rezzonico. The Major Domo alludes to Lord Talbot's being Lord Steward.

‡ Thomas Boothby Schrimshire, Esq.

If I can find an opportunity of presenting the account of the statues, I certainly will, and in a manner not to hurt you. Strange's information is, I believe, by no means ill-founded, and I give up my advice. Kings, though the representatives of Heaven, have none of its all seeingness inserted in their patents, and being obliged to use many pair of eyes besides their own, no wonder if they are made to pay for all the light they borrow. The young King has excellent and various dispositions—just so many occasions for being imposed upon! Whatever a King loves, is ready money to those who gratify his inclinations—except he loves what his grandfather did, the money itself. I who love the arts, like the King, have found that even I was worth cheating.

Blessed be Providence! we are going to have peace; I do not regret it, though the little dabs I save would be almost doubled if the Stocks continued at low-water mark. France, who will dictate even in humiliation, has declared to Sweden that she must and will make peace; that even their Imperial furiousnesses, Tisiphone and Alecto,* would be content with less perdition of the King of Prussia than they had meditated; and when snakes smile, who can help hoping? France adds, that she will even let the peace be made *vis-à-vis du Roi de la Grande Bretagne.* It is to be treated here, and the imps of the two Empresses are to reside at Paris, to communicate their instructions; the congress will be afterwards held, for form, at Augsbourg. All Canada is offered. I don't believe we shall be intractable, as all Prince Ferdinand's visionary vivacities are vanished into smoke; his nephew is again beaten, himself retired to Paderborne, and the siege of Cassel raised. Luckily, the French cannot pursue their success for want of magazines.

And so you don't think we are obliged to Mr. Pitt? Yes, I am sure you do. Who would have believed five years ago that France would send to Whitehall to beg peace? And why would they not have believed it? Why, because nobody foresaw that the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Hardwicke would not be as absolute as ever. Had they continued in power, the Duke of Newcastle would now be treating at Paris to be *Intendant* of Sussex, and Sir Joseph Yorke would be made a Prince of the empire for signing the cession of Hanover. 'Tis better as it is, though the city of London should burn Mr. Pitt in effigy upon the cessation of contracts and remittances. And so you and I are creeping near to one another again; we shall be quite sociable when there is only *all* France betwixt us. Will you breakfast in the Holbein chamber the first week in June?

I must announce a loss to you though scarce a misfortune, as you never saw her. Your *dear* brother's second daughter is dead of a consumption. She was a most soft-tempered creature, like him, and consequently what he much loved.

As the elections are now almost over, people will begin to think

* The two Empresses of Germany and Russia.

of something else, or at least will consider what they intend to think about next winter—no matter what! Let us sheath the sword, and fight about what we will. Adieu!

LETTER IX.

Strawberry-Hill, May 14th, 1761.

From your silence, I began to fear you were ill; but yesterday I received yours of the 25th of last month, with the account of your absence at Pisa. The little convulsions which surprised you so much in my letter of March 17th, subsided the moment they were settled; and if any factions design to form themselves, they will at least not bespeak their colours till next session of Parliament, or till the peace. The latter is the present object and the stocks at least give credit to the professions of France. The impertinent Bussy* (who, I believe, will be a little more humble than formerly) is coming, exchanged with Mr. Stanley,†—but with all the impatience of France to treat, they modestly proposed that Bussy should come in the man-of-war that carried Stanley. This was flatly refused; and an *Irish* arrangement is made; the one is to be at Dover, the other at Calais, on the 22nd, and if the same wind can blow contrary ways at once, they will sail at the same moment; if it cannot, I am persuaded the French weathercocks will not blow east till ours have been four-and-twenty hours in the west. I am not among the credulous, not conceiving why the Court of Versailles should desire a peace at the beginning of a campaign, when they will have so much more in bank to treat with at the end of it. They will have Hesse and Hanover; shall we have the Rock of Belleisle? That expedition engrosses as much attention as the peace. Though I have no particular friends there, I tremble every day in expectation of bloody journals, whether successful or disadvantageous. Sir William Williams, a young man much talked of, for his exceeding ambition, enterprising spirit, and some parts, in Parliament, is already fallen there; and even he was too great a price for such a trumpery island—we have dozens as good in the north of Scotland, and of as much consequence. For the Empress Queen, she has marked her Christian disposition to peace sufficiently, by forbidding her Knights of Malta to assist their religion, lest it should offend the Turk, and take her off from pursuing the King of Prussia.

Your friend, Lord Huntingdon, is safe—at least till some new Court-earthquake. To Mr. Doddington you ask what you shall say? Nothing: but to my Lord Melcombe address as many lords and lordships as you please, and you cannot err: he is as fond of his title as

* The Abbé de Bussy: he had been very insolent even to the King, in a former negotiation for a neutrality for Hanover.

† Hans Stanley, Esq.

his child could be, if he had one.* Another of your friends, Lord Northampton, is named to return the compliment to Venice.

I rejoice that you have got Mr. Pitt;† make him a thousand speeches for me, and tell him how much I say you will like one another. You will be happy too in Sir Richard Lyttelton and his duchess;‡ they are the best humoured people in the world. I promised you another duchess, the famous beauty—she of Hamilton, but she is returning to England. In her room I announce her Grace of Grafton,§ a passion of mine—not a regular beauty, but one of the finest women you ever saw, and with more dignity and address. She is one of our first great ladies. She goes first to Genoa—an odd place for her health, but she is not very bad. The duke goes with her, and as it is not much from inclination that she goes, perhaps they will not agree whither they shall go next. He is a man of strict honour, and does not want sense, nor good-breeding; but is not particularly familiar, nor particularly good-humoured, nor at all particularly generous.

As we have a rage at present for burlettas, I wish you would send me the music of your present one, which you say is so charming. If pleasures can tempt people to stay in town, there will be a

* Lord Melcombe's love of display was excessive. "His mansion at Eastbury," says Cumberland, "was magnificent, massy, and stretching out to a great extent in front, with an enormous portico of Doric columns, ascended by a stately flight of steps. There were turrets and wings that went I knew not whither, though now they are levelled with the ground, and gone to more ignoble uses. Vanbrugh, who constructed this superb edifice, seemed to have had the plan of Blenheim in his thoughts; and the interior was as proud and splendid as the exterior was bold and imposing. All this was exactly in unison with the taste of its magnificent owner, who had gilt and furnished the apartments with a profusion of finery that kept no terms with simplicity, and not always with elegance. His town-house in Pall Mall, his villa at Hammersmith, and the mansion above described, were such as few nobles in the nation were possessed of. In either of these he was not to be approached but through a suite of apartments, and rarely seated but under painted ceilings and gilt entablatures. In this villa, you are conducted through two rows of antique marble statues, ranged in a gallery floored with the rarest marbles and enriched with columns of granite and lapis lazuli. His saloon was hung with the finest Gobelin tapestry, and he slept in a bed encanopied with peacocks' feathers. He had a wardrobe loaded with rich and flaring suits, each in itself a load to the wearer. His bulk and corpulency gave full display to a vast expanse and profusion of brocade and embroidery, and this, when set off with an enormous type-periwig, and deep-laced ruffles, gave the picture of an ancient courtier in his gala habit. Being a man of humble birth, he seemed to have an innate respect for titles, and none bowed with more devotion to the robes and fasces of high rank and office. He paid his court to Sir Robert Walpole in panegyric poems; to Chesterfield, to Winnington, Pulteney, Fox, he offered up the obligations of his genius. In his latter days the Earl of Bute, in the plenitude of power, was the god of his idolatry. That noble lord, unwilling to overlook a witty head that bowed so low, put a coronet upon it, which, like the 'barren sceptre' in the hand of Macbeth, merely served as a ticket for the coronation procession; and having nothing else to leave to posterity in memory of its owner, left its mark on the lid of his coffin."—Ed.

† Thomas Pitt of Boconnock.

‡ Rachel Duchess dowager of Bridgewater, married to her second husband, Richard, brother of George first, Lord Lyttelton.

§ Anne Liddel, only child of Lord Ravensworth, was first married to Augustus Henry Duke of Grafton, and, being divorced from him, secondly, to John Fitzpatrick, second Earl of Upper Ossory.

harvest all summer; operas at the little theatre in the Hay-market, and plays at Drury-lane.

I have lost one of the oldest friends I had in the world, Lord Edgecumbe;* a martyr to gaming. With every quality to make himself agreeable, he did nothing but make himself miserable. I feel the loss much, though long expected; and it is the more sensible here, where I saw most of him. My towers rise, my galleries and cloisters extend—for what? For me to leave or to inhabit by myself, when I have survived my friends! Yet, with these ungrateful reflections, how I wish once to see you here! And of what should we most talk?—of a dear friend we have both, alas! survived. Gal. served me to talk to of you—now I can only talk to you of him! But I will not—I love to communicate my satisfactions—my melancholy I generally shut up in my own breast. Adieu!

LETTER X.

Strawberry Hill, July 9th, 1761.

Was it worth while to write a letter on purpose to tell you that Belleisle was taken? I did not think the news worth postage. I stayed, and hoped to send you peace. Yesterday I concluded I should. An extraordinary Privy Council of all the members in and near town was summoned by the King's own messengers, not by those of the Council, to meet *on the most urgent and important business.* To sanctify or to reject the pacification, was concluded. Not at all—To declare a queen. *Urgent* business enough, I believe; I do not see how it was *important.* The handkerchief has been tossed a vast way; it is to a Charlotte, Princess of Mecklenbourg. Lord Harcourt is to be at her father's court—if he can find it—on the first of August, and the coronation of both their Majesties is fixed for the 22nd of September. What food for newsmongers, tattle, solicitations, mantua-makers, jewellers, &c., for above two months to come!

Though exceedingly rejoiced that we are to have more young princes and princesses, I cannot help wishing the Council had met for a peace. It seems to be promised, but I hate delays, and dread the episode of a battle. Bussy has taken a temporary house, and is to be presented here as Stanley has been at Paris.

You will be pleased with a story from thence: Monsieur de Souvré, a man of wit was at Madame Pompadour's, who is learning German. He said, "Il me semble que depuis que Madame la Marquise apprenne l'Allemande, elle écorche le François." As the company laughed violently at this, the King came in, and would know what diverted them so much. They were forced to tell him. He was

* Richard, second Lord Edgecombe.

very angry, and said, "Monsieur de Souvré, estil longtems que vous n'avez pas été à vos terres?" "Oui, Sire," replied he; "mais je compte d'y partir ce soir." The frank *hardiesse* of the answer saved him.

Have you seen Voltaire's miserable imitation, or second part, or dregs, of his "Candide?" Have you seen his delightful ridicule of the Nouvelle Eloïse, called "Prediction?"

I have often threatened you with a visit to Florence; I believe I shall now be forced to make you one, for I am ruining myself; my gallery, cabinet, and round tower, will cost immensely. However, if you can, find me a pedestal; it will at least look well in my auction. The brocadella I shall postpone a little, not being too impatient for a commission of bankruptcy.

I have not connexion enough with the Northumberlands to recommend a governor for their son. I don't even know that he is going abroad. The poor lad,* who has a miserable constitution, has been very near taking a longer journey. His brother† has as flimsy a texture; and they have just lost their only daughter.

Adieu! We shall abound with news for three or four months, but it will all be of pageants.

LETTER XI.

Strawberry Hill, July 23d, 1761.

One cannot take the trouble of sending every victory by itself; I stay till I have enough to make a pacquet, and then write to you. On Monday last we learned the conquest of Pondicherry, and away went a courier to Mr. Stanley to raise our terms. Before the man could get halfway, comes an account of the entire defeat of Broglio and Soubise. I don't know what Mr. Stanley will be to ask now. We have been pretty well accustomed to victories of late, and yet this last is as much as we know how to bear decently; it is heightened by the extreme distress our army had suffered, and by the little hopes we had of even keeping our ground against such superior force. It seals all our other conquests; we have nothing to restore for Germany. The King may be crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle, like Charlemagne, if he pleases, and receive the diadems of half the world. Of all our glories, none ever gave me such joy as this last. Mr. Conway, you know, is with Prince Ferdinand, and is safe—indeed every body is; we lost but one officer of rank, a Lieutenant-Colonel Keith; and two are wounded, a Lieutenant-Colonel Marlay and Captain

* Earl Percy, eldest son of the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland.

† Lord Algernon Percy. Lord Northumberland was not made a duke till after the period of the letter above.

Harry Townshend.* No particulars are come yet; if I hear any before this goes away, you shall.

You will see the history of Pondicherry in the Gazette. Pray like Monsieur Lally's spirited insolence in the crisis of his misfortune. His intercepted letter shows it was not mere impertinence, but that he had tried and attempted every thing upon earth to save his charge. We have got another little wind-fall in the West Indies, the isle of Dominique; but one does not stoop to pick up such diminutive countries, unless they are absolutely of no use, like Belleisle, and then it is heroic obstinacy to insist on having them.

How all this must sound to the Princess of Mecklenburgh! To be sure, she thinks herself coming to marry Alexander the Great. There is a Lady Statira Lenox† who had like to have stood a little in her way, or, rather, I believe, helped her a little on her way. The Mother-Duchess is dead, and retards the nuptials, but the princess is expected, however, by the end of August.

Is Sir Richard Lyttelton with you, and Mr. Pitt?—the latter's father‡ was just married again; but, to make his son some amends for giving away a jointure of 600*l.* a-year, is just dead—very happily for his family.

The new Queen's family§ consists of Lord Harcourt, Master of the Horse; Duke of Manchester, Chamberlain; Mr. Stone, Treasurer. The Duchess of Ancaster, Mistress of the Robes, and First Lady of the Bed-chamber; the others are, the Duchess of Hamilton, Lady Effingham, Lady Northumberland, Lady Weymouth, and Lady Bolingbroke. Bed-chamber Women and Maids of Honour, I could tell you some too; but what can you care about the names of girls whose parents were not married when you were in England? This is not the only circumstance in which you would not know your own country again. You left it a private little island, living upon its means. You would find it the capital of the world; and, to talk with the arrogance of a Roman, St. James's Street crowded with nabobs and American Chiefs, and Mr. Pitt attended in his Sabine farm by Eastern Monarchs and Borealian electors, waiting, till the gout is gone out of his foot, for an audience. The city of London is so elated, that I think it very lucky some alderman did not insist on—

Matching his daughter with the King.

Adieu! I shall be in town to-morrow; and, perhaps, able to wrap up and send you half-a-dozen French standards in my postscript.

* Third son of Thomas Townshend, Teller of the Exchequer, who was second son of Charles Viscount Townshend, Secretary of State.

† Lady Sarah Lenox, sister of the Duke of Richmond, with whom the King was thought to be in love.

‡ Thomas Pitt, elder brother of the famous William Pitt.

§ Simon, first Earl of Harcourt; Robert Montague, Duke of Manchester; Andrew Stone; Mary Panton, Duchess of Ancaster; Eliz. Gunning, Duchess of Hamilton; Eliz. Beckford, Countess of Effingham; Eliz. Seymour, Countess of Northumberland; Eliz. Bentinck, Viscountess Weymouth; Diana Spencer, Viscountess Bolingbroke; and Alicia Carpenter, Countess of Egremont, omitted above.

Arlington Street, Friday 24th.

Alack! I do not find our total victory so total as it was. It is true we have taken three thousand prisoners; but we have lost two thousand, and the French army is still so superior as to be able to afford it. The Broglians thought themselves betrayed by the Soubisians, whose centre did not attack. Some say, it was impossible—that is not your business nor mine; there are certainly great jarrings in their army—but the worst is (I mean to me) there is likely to be another battle. I wish they would be beaten once for all, and have done!

LETTER XII.

Arlington Street, Aug. 17, 1761.

I AM come to town to-day to prepare my wedding garments. The new Queen may be here by this day se'nnight, but scarce will before the 28th, and if the winds are not in hymeneal humour, it may be the Lord knows how long. There will be as great magnificence as people can put upon their backs—nothing more; no shows, no ceremonies. Six drawing-rooms and one ball—that is all; and then the honey-moon in private till the coronation. They told me the painting of the Charlotte yacht would certainly turn the Queen's stomach. I said if her head is not turned, she may compound for any thing else. Think of the Crown of England and a handsome young King dropping out of the clouds into Strelitz! The crowds, the multitudes, the millions, that are to stare at her; the swarms to kiss her hand, the pomp of the coronation. She need be but seventeen to bear it.

In the meantime, adieu peace! France has refused to submit to our terms. They own themselves undone, but depend on the continuation of the war for revenging them—not by arms, but by exhausting us. I can tell you our terms pretty exactly. All Canada, but letting them fish on Newfoundland; Goree and Senegal, but with a promise of helping them somehow or other in their black trade; the neutral islands to be divided; Hesse and Hanover restored, and Minorca; Guadaloupe and Belleisle to return to them. The East Indies postponed to the congress; Dunkirk to be demolished *à la* Utrecht; at least, *à l'*Aix-la-Chapelle. The last article is particularly offered to glory. If they have no fleet, Dunkirk will not hurt us; when they have, twenty other places will do the business, especially if they have Nieuport and Ostend, on which, notwithstanding all reports, I hear we have been silent. Our terms are lofty; yet, could they expect that we would undo them and ourselves for nothing? We shall be like the late Duke of Marlborough, have a vast landed estate, and want a guinea.

The great prince of the coal-pits, Sir James Lowther, marries the eldest infanta of the adjoining coal-pits, Lord Bute's daughter. You

will allow this earl is a fortunate man; the late King, old Wortley, and the Duke of Argyle,* all dying in a year, and his daughter married to such an immense fortune! He certainly behaves with great moderation, and nobody has had reason to complain of him. Adieu!

LETTER XIII.

Arlington Street, Sept. 10, 1761.

When we least expected the Queen, she came, after being ten days at sea, but without sickness for above half-an-hour. She was gay the whole voyage, sung to her harpsichord, and left the door of her cabin open. They made the coast of Suffolk last Saturday, and on Monday morning she landed at Harwich; so prosperously has his Majesty's chief eunuch, as they have made the Tripoline ambassador call Lord Anson, executed his commission. She lay that night at your old friend Lord Abercorn's at Witham; and, if she judged by her host, must have thought she was coming to reign in the realm of taciturnity. She arrived at St. James's a quarter after three on Tuesday the 8th. When she first saw the palace she turned pale: the Duchess of Hamilton smiled. "My dear duchess," said the Princess, "*you* may laugh; you have been married twice; but it is no joke to me." Is this a bad proof of her sense? On the journey they wanted her to curl her toupet. "No, indeed," said she, "I think it looks as well as those of the ladies who have been sent for me: if the King would have me wear a periwig, I will; otherwise I shall let myself alone." The Duke of York gave her his hand at the garden-gate; her lips trembled, but she jumped out with spirit. In the garden the King met her; she would have fallen at his feet; he prevented and embraced her, and led her into the apartments, where she was received by the Princess of Wales and Lady Augusta:† these three princesses only dined with the King. At ten the procession went to chapel, preceded by unmarried daughters of peers, and peeresses in plenty. The new Princess was led by the Duke of York and Prince William;‡ the Archbishop married them; the King talked to her the whole time with great good humour, and the Duke of Cumberland gave her away. She is not tall, nor a beauty; pale, and very thin; but looks sensible, and is genteel. Her hair is darkish and fine; her forehead low, her nose very well, except the nostrils spreading too wide; her mouth has the same fault, but her teeth are good. She talks a good deal, and French tolerably; possesses herself, is frank, but with great

* By whose death Lord Bute obtained the chief power in Scotland.

† Daughter of the Princess of Wales and sister of George III. In 1764 she married the hereditary Prince of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel, and had six children, one of whom was Caroline, consort of George IV.—Ed.

‡ Afterwards Duke of Gloucester.

respect to the King. After the ceremony, the whole company came into the drawing-room for about ten minutes, but nobody was presented that night. The Queen was in white and silver; an endless mantle of violet-coloured velvet, lined with ermine, and attempted to be fastened on her shoulder by a bunch of large pearls, dragged itself and almost the rest of her clothes half way down her waist. On her head was a beautiful little tiara of diamonds; a diamond necklace, and a stomacher of diamonds, worth three score thousand pounds, which she is to wear at the coronation too. Her train was borne by the ten bridemaids, Lady Sarah Lennox, Lady Caroline Russel, Lady Caroline Montagu, Lady Harriet Bentinick, Lady Anne Hamilton, Lady Essex Kerr, daugthers of Dukes of Richmond, Bedford, Manchester, Portland, Hamilton, and Roxburgh; and four daughters of the Earls of Albemarle, Brook, Harcourt, and Ilchester, Lady Elizabeth Keppel, Louisa Greville, Elizabeth Harcourt, and Susan Fox Strangways; their heads crowned with diamonds, and in robes of white and silver. Lady Caroline Russel* is extremely handsome; Lady Elizabeth Keppel† very pretty; but with neither features nor air, nothing ever looked so charming as Lady Sarah Lennox;‡ she has all the glow of beauty peculiar to her family. As supper was not ready, the Queen sat down, sung, and played on the harpsichord to the royal family, who all supped with her in private. They talked of the different German dialects; the King asked if the Hanovarian was not pure—"Oh, no sir," said the Queen; "it is the worst of all."—She will not be unpopular.

The Duke of Cumberland told the King that himself and Lady Augusta were sleepy. The Queen was very averse to leave the company, and at last articled that nobody should accompany her but the Princess of Wales, and her own two German women, and that nobody should be admitted afterwards but the King—they did not retire till between two and three.

The next morning the King had a levee. He said to Lord Hardwicke, "It is a very fine day:" that old gossip replied, "Yes, Sir, and it was a very fine night." Lord Bute had told the King that Lord Orford had betted his having a child before Sir James Lowther, who had been married the night before to Lord Bute's eldest daughter; the King told Lord Orford he should be glad to go his halves. The bet was made with Mr. Rigby.§ Somebody asked the latter how he could be so bad a courtier as to bet against the King? He replied, "Not at all a bad courtier; I betted Lord Bute's daughter against him."

After the King's levee there was a drawing-room; the Queen stood under the throne; the women were presented to her by the Duchess of Hamilton, and then the men by the Duke of Manchester; but, as

* Afterwards Duchess of Marlborough.

† Afterwards Marchioness of Tavistock.

‡ Lady Sarah Lennox was married to Sir Charles Bunbury, and being divorced from him, to Captain Napier.

§ Richard Rigby, afterwards Paymaster of the Forces.

she knew nobody she was not to speak. At night there was a ball, drawing-rooms yesterday and to-day, and then a cessation of ceremony till the coronation, except next Monday, when she is to receive the address of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, sitting on the throne attended by the bridemaids. A ridiculous circumstance happened yesterday; Lord Westmorland not very young nor clear-sighted, mistook Lady Sarah Lennox for the Queen, kneeled to her and would have kissed her hand if she had not prevented him. People think that a Chancellor of Oxford was naturally attracted by the blood of Stuart. It is as comical to see Kitty Dashwood,* the famous old beauty of the Oxfordshire Jacobites, living in the palace as Duenna to the Queen. She and Mrs. Boughton, Lord Lyttelton's ancient Delia, are revived again in a young court that never heard of them. There, I think, you could not have had a more circumstantial account of a Royal wedding from the Heralds' Office. Adieu!

Yours to serve you,

HORACE SANDFORD.

Mecklenburgh King-at-Arms.

LETTER XIV.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 28, 1761.

WHAT is the finest sight in the world? A coronation. What do people talk most about? A coronation. What is delightful to have passed? A coronation. Indeed, one had need be a handsome young peeress not to be fatigued to death with it. After being exhausted with hearing of nothing else for six weeks, and having every cranny of my ideas stuffed with velvet and ermine, and tresses, and jewels, I thought I was very cunning in going to lie in Palace-yard, that I might not sit up all night in order to seize a place. The consequence of this wise scheme was, that I did not get a wink of sleep all night; hammering of scaffolds, shouting of people, relieving guards, and jangling of bells, was the concert I heard from twelve to six, when I rose; and it was noon before the procession was ready to set forth, and night before it returned from the Abbey. I then saw the hall, the dinner, and the champion, a gloriously-illuminated chamber, a wretched banquet, and a foolish puppet-show. A trial of a peer, though by no means so sumptuous, is a preferable sight, for the latter is interesting. At a coronation one sees the peerage as exalted as they like to be, and at a trial as much humbled as a plebeian wishes them. I tell you nothing of who looked well; you know them no more than if I told you of the next coronation. Yes, two ancient dames whom you remember, were still ornaments of the

† Mrs. Catherine Dashwood, on whom Mr. Hammond wrote many poems.

show,—the Duchess of Queensberry* and Lady Westmorland.† Some of the peeresses were so fond of their robes, that they graciously exhibited themselves for a whole day before to all the company their servants could invite to see them. A maid from Richmond begged leave to stay in town because the Duchess of Montrose‡ was only to be seen from two to four. The heralds were so ignorant of their business, that, though pensioned for nothing but to register lords and ladies, and what belongs to them, they advertised in the newspaper for the Christian names and places of abode of the peeresses. The King complained of such omissions and of the want of precedents; Lord Effingham,§ the Earl Marshal, told him, it was true there had been great neglect in that office, but he had now taken such care of registering directions, that *next coronation* would be conducted with the greatest order imaginable. The King was so diverted with this *flattering* speech that he made the earl repeat it several times.

On this occasion one saw to how high-water-mark extravagance is risen in England. At the coronation of George II. my mother gave forty guineas for a dining-room, scaffold, and bed-chamber. An exactly parallel apartment, only with rather a worse view, was this time set at three hundred and fifty guineas—a tolerable rise in thirty-three years! The platform from St. Margaret's roundhouse to the church-door, which formerly let for forty pounds, went this time for two thousand four hundred pounds. Still more was given for the inside of the Abbey. The prebends would like a coronation every year. The King paid nine thousand pounds for the hire of jewels; indeed, last time, it cost my father fourteen hundred to bejewel my Lady Orford.‖ A single shop now sold six hundred pounds' sterling worth of nails—but nails are risen—so is every thing, and every thing adulterated. If we conquer Spain, as we have done France, I expect to be poisoned. Alas! we *are* going to conquer Spain. They have taken France by the hand, and bully for her. Mr. Pitt, who desires nothing better than to bid upon any body's haughtiness, has recalled Mr. Stanley, and would willingly have recalled my Lord Bristol too. If the Turks don't know what to do with their armament, Mr. Pitt will be obliged to them if they will be a little impertinent too. If all this did but starve us I should not much mind it: I should look as well as other people in haughty rags, and while one's dunghill is the first dunghill in Europe, one is content. But the lives! the lives it will cost! to wade through blood to dignity! I had rather be a worm than a vulture. Besides, I am no gamester; I do not love doubling the bet, but would realize something.

* Catharine Hyde, Duchess of Queensberry.
† Mary Cavendish, Countess of Westmoreland.
‡ Lucy Manners, Duchess of Montrose.
§ Thomas Howard, second Earl of Effingham, Deputy Earl Marshal.
‖ Margaret Rolle, wife of Robert Lord Walpole, eldest son of Sir Robert Walpole, and afterwards Earl of Orford.

The Duchess of Grafton is drawing nearer to you; you will see her the by the end of winter; they leave Geneva the 10th of next month, and go to Turin. I believe I liked the coronation the less for wanting the principal figure. Good night!

LETTER XV.

Arlington Street, Oct. 6, 1761.

I WROTE to you but last week. You will conclude I have a victory to tell you, by following that letter with another so soon. Oh, no! you may bid adieu to victories. It is not that Spain or we have declared war, but Mr. Pitt has resigned. The Cabinet Council were for temporizing. That is not *his* style.

Without entering into discussions of which side is in the right, you will easily see how fatal this event must be, even from its creating two sides. What saved us; and then what lifted us so high, but Union? What could France, what could your old friend the Empress-Queen, desire so ardently as divisions amongst us? They will have their wish to satiety. I foresee nothing but confusion. Nor shall we have a war the less: if Spain bullied while Mr. Pitt was minister, I don't believe she will tremble more at his successors. Who they will be I cannot imagine. It required all his daring to retrieve our affairs. Who will dare for him, nay, and against him? Next to pitying our country and ourselves, I feel for the young King. It is hard to have so bright a dawn so soon overcast! I fear he is going to taste as bitter a cup as ever his grandfather swallowed! This happened but yesterday. It is not an event to lie dormant long without consequences.

Adieu! my dear child; this is an unpleasant letter, and I don't care how soon I finish it. Squabbles of ministers are entertaining in time of Peace; they are a little too serious now. Adieu!

LETTER XVI.

Arlington Street, Oct. 8th, 1761.

I WRITE to you so often, you will think I have succeeded Mr. Pitt as Secretary of State. The truth is, I want to overtake my last letter. I fear I was peevish in it. I was

> So odd, my country's ruin made me grave.

Forgive me; it was an air of departing haughtiness. We have been used of late to triumph; it felt unpleasant to relinquish glory; and I

am exactly that sort of philosopher to be angry if I am not prepared to keep my temper.

Spain tells us to-day that she means us no harm. She has only made a defensive and *offensive* league with France to keep the *peace.* When she hears Mr. Pitt is out, I suppose she will make a neutrality, that she may invade Ireland. If she does, pray hold your militia ready to attack Naples.

Great attempts, great offers have been made to recover Mr. Pitt. He waives them, goes to court, bows, and goes to Bath. In the city it was proposed at first to go into mourning on his resignation; as yet they have come to no resolution. It will perhaps depend on some trifle to set fire to the train—should it not be lighted up now, that will insure nothing. It cannot be indifferent whether he is in place or out. Your new master is to be Lord Egremont,* who was to have gone to Augsburgh: he is to have the Seals to-morrow. As Mr. Pitt declares against being hostile, I conclude nobody will resign with him.

Lady Mary Wortley is arrived. I have not seen her yet, though they have not made her perform quarantine for her own dirt.

This short letter, and t'other short letter, make a long one. Adieu!

Stop, I have told you a monstrous lie; Lady Mary is not arrived; it was a Dutch blunder of Lady Denbigh,† who confounded Lady Mary Wrottesley and Lady Mary Wortley.

Lord Talbot, on Mr. Pitt's resignation, advised the Duke of Newcastle not to die for joy on the Monday, nor for fear on Tuesday.

LETTER XVII.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 10, 1761.

Am not I an old fool? at my years to be a dupe to virtue and patriotism! I, who have seen all the virtue of England sold six times over! Here have I fallen in love with my father's enemies, and because they served my country, believed they were the most virtuous men upon earth. I adored Mr. Pitt, as if I was just coming from school and reading Livy's lies of Brutus and Camillus, and Fabius; and romance knows whom. Alack! alack! Mr. Pitt loves an estate as well as my Lord Bath! The Conqueror of Canada, of Afric, of India, would, if he had been in the latter, have brought my Lady Esther‡ as many diamonds as General Clive took. Spain assures us she is still very pacific, and what if France would have been so too, if Mr. Pitt would have suffered her! one day or other we shall know. In the mean time, as the mob have not pulled the King out of St. James's,

* Sir Charles Windham, first Earl of Egremont.
† Isabella de Jonghe of Utrecht, wife of William Fielding, Earl of Denbigh.
‡ Lady Esther, wife of Mr. Pitt, and sister of Lord Temple.

nor Mr. Pitt into it again, the latter has contented himself with a barony for Lady Esther, and three thousand pounds a-year for three lives. Lord Temple has resigned; I don't understand that. Mr. George Grenville is to be representing Minister in the House of Commons, and not Speaker: Lord Egremont is Secretary of State; and Lord Hardwicke, I suppose, Privy Seal. You will like your new master the Secretary, who is extremely well bred.

Don't be frightened at this torrent of letters; I will send you no more this age; and when I do, I shall only talk to you of assemblies, plays, operas, balls, &c., which are subjects of dignity compared to politics.

Is Sir Richard Lyttelton* with you still, or in your neighbourhood? You need not read my opinion to him of this transaction. Confess, however, that I send you quick intelligence,—three letters in a week.

LETTER XVIII.

Arlington Street, Nov. 14, 1761.

If my share in our correspondence was all considered, I could willingly break it off; it is wearisome to pursue the thread of folly for so many years, and with the same personages on the scene. Patriotism, prostitution, power, patriotism again—one ought to be new to it all, to see it in an amusing light—but I recollect that you wish to hear it, and I submit to run through a recapitulation of what moves little more than my contempt!

The Common Council (calling themselves the City of London) have given Mr. Pitt a dispensation for taking a pension, on his writing them a letter, in which he acquainted them, that as he could not be monarch for their sakes, he would content himself, like them, with a private station, and with giving all the disturbance he could. You have seen his letters in the papers—my paraphrase is not stronger, than his own commentary on his behaviour. They thanked him, and instructed their members to tread in his steps. Hitherto this flame has had much ado to spread. Exeter, and Stirling, and at last York, are the only towns that have copied the example.

In the midst of this came over the negotiation for peace published in France—a melancholy volume to any feeling heart! You may see what a beneficial, what a splendid peace we might have had; you will not so easily find the reason why we rejected it. You will see nothing but facility on their side, nothing but haughtiness on ours; yet the eyes that the pension and peerage could not open are not purged by this memorial. There are men who wish for more than the world we have conquered!

Well! the Parliament opened; and the first production of the re-

* Cousin of Lady Esther, and attached to Mr. Pitt.

baptised patriots, was a *constitutional* proposal from Lord Temple for a *First Minister*. Patriots used to attack such officers, though they intended to be in their place; this is the first time they ever demanded such a post for the good of their country. This was on the address, and was answered by the Duke of Bedford.

A week afterwards the King, Queen, and royal family dined with the Lord Mayor; but a young King, and a new Queen, were by no means the principal objects of attention. A chariot and pair, containing Mr. Pitt and Lord Temple, formed the chief part of the triumph. The reception, acclamation, and distinction paid to Mr. Pitt through the streets, and the observance of him in Guildhall, were equal to any thing you can imagine. You will call his appearance there arrogant,—I do not think it was very well bred. Since that—for pensions stop the mouths only of courtiers, not of the virtuous—he has harangued in the House with exceeding applause; it was fine, guarded, artful—very inflammatory. Don't think I am paying court by censuring a *late* minister. He is too near being minister again for mine to be interested conduct. It never was my turn, nor do the examples I see make me more in love with the practice. Nor think me changed lightly about Mr. Pitt—nobody admired him more—you saw it. When he preferred haughtiness to humanity, glory to peaceful glory,—when his disinterestedness could not resist a pension, nor a pension make him grateful—he changed, not I. When he courts a mob, I certainly change; and whoever does court the mob, whether an orator or a mountebank, whether Mr. Pitt or Dr. Rock, are equally contemptible in my eyes. Could I now decide by a wish, he should have remained in place, or have been ruined by his pension. When he would not do all the good in his power, I would leave him no power to do harm,—would that were always the case! Alas! I am a speculatist and he is a statesman; but I have that advantage, or disadvantage, over others of my profession, I have seen too much to flatter myself with visions!

George Pitt, whom you must well remember, is coming to you to Turin, with his lovely wife,* all loveliness within and without. If you see my duchess† soon, tell her I trust my letter of thanks for the *découpure*‡ she sent me of herself did not miscarry. We hear your neighbour Sir Richard§ thinks of resigning the Jewel-Office. Adieu!

Nov. 16th.

I HAVE just received yours of the 31st of last month, but can tell you no more than I have already said. We don't know the particulars of the treaty between Spain and France: Lord Bristol‖ is cer-

* Penelope, sister of Sir Richard Atkins, wife of George Pitt, afterwards Lord Rivers. She is celebrated in Horace Walpole's poem, on the Beauties.

† The Duchess of Grafton.

‡ Her figure cut out in card by Monsieur Hubert of Geneva, who was famous in that art.

§ Sir R. Lyttelton.

‖ George William Hervey, Earl of Bristol, ambassador at Madrid.

tainly coming home; Lord Temple says, has *demanded* to come, and insinuates, from political reasons; the court calls it asking to come for his health; he certainly has wished to come before these broils. You may expect new events every day in politics. I don't see how we can make peace, or another war; even in Germany it is not over for this campaign. Lord Granby and Mr. Conway have been successful in some fresh skirmishes, when I thought the latter gone to Pyrmont, for his amusement, and the rest of our generals coming home. As he went abroad last, he does not return this winter. When the Officers do come I expect a new scene; we hear of nothing but hardships and abuses; the German war was already become unpopular, and had Mr. Pitt sunk entirely, would not have supported itself. It will require all the compromising spirit of the age to bring things back into a settled channel. I am not shining in prophecy, so I shall foretell nothing; while we have a shilling left, it will quiet somebody or other. Good night.

P.S. I have forgot to answer one of your questions, that I can answer: you ask if the city had not rather part with Mr. Pitt than have a Spanish war? How *tramontane* you are! I believe the chief reason of their forgiving his pension, was his holding out Spanish plunder to them. Though they say they have ceased to be Jacobites, they have not relinquished the principles of privateering, brokerage, insurance, contracts, and twenty other tenets, not to be found in the Crusca.* Perhaps, you do not know that merchants thrive by taxes, which ruin every body else. Your own country is delightful, but you are not acquainted with half its virtues.

LETTER XIX.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 12, 1761.

You may conclude, my dear sir, that when my letters do not arrive so frequently as you expect, there have been no great events. I never fail you at a new epoch; nay, nor let you lose any considerable links of the political chain. My details, indeed, must be more barren than they were twenty years ago, when I came fresh from talking with you of the *dramatis personæ*, and when your own acquaintance with them was recent. When I mention them now, I talk to you of Sevarambians,† of unknown nations; or must enter into more explanations than could be packed up in a letter. The new opposition have not proceeded very briskly, considering the alertness of their leader: yet they have marked out a camp at the St. Alban's tavern, and in a council of war determined that the chief effort of the campaign should be exerted in behalf of a perpetual militia: a measure most unwelcome to many of the great lords, and not peculiarly agreeable to

* Alluding to the celebrated Dictionary of the *Academici della Crusca*.
† There was a political French romance, called *L'Histoire des Sevarambes*.

all concerned in that service; yet difficult to be denied now, lest the officers should disband, in a moment when we have so few regulars at home, and are threatened with an invasion, if such a thing can be put in practice. This plan has waited for the arrival from Germany of General George Townshend,* the restorer of militia, who is not yet landed; but Lord Strange† is to present the bill two days hence. In the mean time, there have passed scenes, which make this attempt more necessary to Mr. Pitt, and which yet may relax the ardour of his half-ally, Charles Townshend,‡ the Secretary at War, who is discontented with the precedence given to George Grenville, and has attended the assemblies at the St. Alban's. Last Wednesday the question of the war in Germany was agitated. The Court support it, for they don't know how to desert it, nor care to be taxed with abatement of vigour; yet the temper of the House of Commons, and the tone even of the advocates for that war, were evidently repugnant to the measure; still as it was accorded unanimously, Mr. Pitt had rather matter of triumph. On Friday, his superiority declined strangely, his friends proposed calling for the memorials that have intervened between us and Spain on their late demands. He supported this proposition with great ability, but even his friends the Tories, who had been falling back to him, abandoned him on this motion, which was rejected with great spirit by the administration; and on putting the question, his numbers were so trifling, that he could not venture a division. If the militia produces no confusion, he must wait for some calamitous moment. The Spanish war is still ambiguous. We do not think they intend it openly; but as any repugnance to it on our side will encourage their flippancies, it is scarce probable but it will arrive, even without the direct intention of either Court. This is the situation of the present minute; your own sagacity will tell you how soon it may be altered.

What an assembly of English dames at Naples! The Duchess of Grafton is at Turin; but, I should think, would soon be at Florence, on her way to Rome. Don't forget to ask her if she received my answer and thanks for her present; I should be vexed if they had not reached her.

The politics occasioned by Mr. Pitt are our only news. The court, the town, the theatres, produce no novelty. Mr. Conway will get a little into Gazettes, though not in a light worthy his name, as it will not be for action: Lord Granby is returning, and leaves the command to him. Lady Ailesbury passes the winter with him in quarters—I believe at Osnaburg.

I have told your brother to let me know when a ship sails. I shall send you the fashionable pamphlets, and prints of the King and Queen. His is like, but not so handsome; the Queen's, rather improved in the features, but with less agreeableness in the countenance than she deserves: yet both are sufficient resemblances. Adieu!

* Eldest son of Charles Viscount Townshend, whom he succeeded in the title.
† James Stanley Lord Strange, only son of the Earl of Derby.
‡ Brother of the foregoing George Townshend.

P.S. Pray, in the first person's pocket that is returning, send me a little box of pastils, such as they burn in churches; the very best you can get. I have a few left, black and in a pyramidal form, that are delicious.

LETTER XX.

Arlington Street, Dec. 28th, 1761.

Our correspondence is a register of events and æras, a chronicle of wars and revolutions in ministries: stay! Mr. Pitt is not restored, but the foundation is laid. The last courier is arrived from Spain: we demanded a sight of their treaty with France, or threatened war. They have refused the one, and defied us to the other. Lord Bristol is on the road home: Fuentes departs immediately. We did not dare to turn out war, as well as Mr. Pitt; and so, I conclude, we shall have both. Three weeks ago he was sunk to nothing; the first calamity will make the nation clamour for him. This will sound very well in his future Plutarch; but, if he had stooped to peace, and had confirmed his conquests, would not his character have been at least as amiable? A single life spared were worth Peru and Mexico, which to be sure he will subdue, the moment we are undone and he becomes necessary.

I know nothing more; but a Spanish war will make my letter as heavy as if it contained eight pages. Young Mr. Pitt* is arrived; we have exchanged visits, but have not met yet, as I have been the last four days at Strawberry. The Parliament is adjourned to the nineteenth of January. My gallery advances, and I push on the works there, for pictures, and baubles, and buildings look to me as if I realized something. I had rather have a bronze than a thousand pounds in the Stocks; for, if Ireland or Jamaica are invaded, I shall still have my bronze: I would not answer so much for the funds, nor will I buy into the new loan of glory. If the Romans or the Greeks were beat, they were beat; they repaired their walls, and did as well as they could; but they did not lose every sesterce, every talent they had, by the defeat affecting their *Change-Alley*. Crassus, the richest man on t'other side their *Temple Bar*, lost his army and his life, and yet their *East India bonds* did not fall an obolus under par. I like that system better than ours. If people would be heroes, they only suffered themselves by a miscarriage; they had a triumph, or a funeral oration, just as it happened; and private folk were entertained with the one or the other, and nobody was a farthing the richer or poorer; but it makes a strange confusion now that brokers are so much concerned in the events of war. How Scipio would have stared if he had been told that he must not demolish Carthage, as

* Mr. Thomas Pitt.

it would ruin several aldermen who had money in the Punic *actions! Apropos*, do you know what a *Bull*, and a *Bear*, and a *Lame Duck*, are? Nay, nor I either; I only am certain that they are neither animals nor fowl, but are extremely interested in the new subscription. I don't believe I apply it right; but I feel as if I should be a *lame duck* if the Spaniards take the vessel that has my altar on board.*

Monday, at night.

I have been abroad, and have heard some particulars that are well worth subjoining to my letter. Fuentes last night delivered copies to the foreign ministers of his master's declaration. It is, properly, the declaration of the King of Spain against Mr. Pitt (a circumstance that will not lessen the dignity of the latter.) It intimates that, if we had asked to see the treaty in a civil manner, we might have obtained it; and it pretends still to have no hostile intentions. Fuentes comments on this latter passage at large. You may judge of their pacific sentiments, by hearing that they have threatened the court of Portugal to march an army into that kingdom if they do not declare offensively against us. War was the only calamity left for the Portuguese to experience. When they have dethroned the royal family at Lisbon, I suppose, according to the tenderness of royal brotherhood, Don Carlos will afford his sister, her husband, and their race, an asylum in his own court. How much better he behaved when he was under your tuition at Naples! The same courier brought Fuentes the Toison d'Or, and carried another to the Duc de Choiseul; in return, the Cordon Bleu was given to Grimaldi at Paris. Well, we *must* make our fortune now we have a monopoly of all the war in Europe!

My Lady Pomfrett† is dead, of a complication of distempers, on the road to Bath. Lady Mary Wortley is not yet arrived. Good night!

LETTER XXI.

Arlington Street, Jan. 4, 1762.

I WROTE to you but last week, just before I heard from you, so you must look on this only as a postscript. The Spanish war that I announced to you is a full and melancholy answer to your idea, if Sir James Grey‡ had gone to Spain—our sailors must go thither first,

* An ancient marble altar that Sir Horace Mann was sending to Walpole from Italy, as a pedestal for his bust of Vespasian.—ED.

† Henrietta Louisa, Countess of Pomfret, often mentioned in the former part of these letters.

‡ He had been minister at Naples, when Charles King of Spain, was King there, with whom he had been a favourite.

either as invaders or prisoners! The war was proclaimed this morning: the proclamation itself shows how little foundation for it. This war was conceived rashly, adopted timidly, carried into practice foolishly, and, I fear, will be executed weakly. But why prophesy, when one hopes to be mistaken?

Besides your letter, I have received one cargo, the burlettas and the residue of Medicean heads; I am much obliged to you for both. The latter are ill-executed but curious: by the Bianca Cappella, one sees that the Electress* is dead. The Uccellatorii,† it was, I think, that you told me was so pretty. It shall be performed, if they will take it.

Mr. Robinson,‡ whom I begin to know a little, tells me that a great discovery has been lately made in Tuscany, of quantities of Etrurian vases. If they are dispersed and sold, and sold cheap, (for till I have taken an Acapulca ship, I shall be very penurious,) I should be glad of a few, if the forms are beautiful; for what they call *the erudition*, I am totally indifferent. A travelling college tutor may be struck with an uncouth fable, and fancy he unravels some point of mythology, that is not worth unravelling; I hate guessing at ugliness, and I know in general, that mysteries are built on the unskilfulness of the artists; the moment nations grew polished, they were always intelligible. Mr. Robinson tells me too, that the Duke of Marlborough has purchased most of Zanetti's gems at Venice. I remember one (you will say there is no end of my memory) which he has not bought. It was a couchant tiger, in alto relievo, and had been prince Eugene's. I wish you would inquire about it, and know what he would have for it. Mr. Murray§ was a good deal an acquaintance of mine in England, and I should think would oblige me about it, but I must know the price first.

My Lady Pomfret has desired to be buried at Oxford. It is of a piece with her life. I dare say she had treasured up some idea of the Countess Matilda, that gave St. Peter his Patrimony.‖ How your ghost and mine will laugh at hers, when posterity begins to consecrate her learning!

The parliament does not meet till the nineteenth; by that time people will have formed some opinion—at present there is much gloom. I don't know whither it will be directed. I have abundance of conjectures, but events so seldom correspond to foresight, that I believe it is as well to act like other soothsayers, and not broach one's visions till they have been fulfilled. Good night.

* The Electress Palatine Dowager, Anne Louisa, was the last of the House of Medici, and from the death of her husband had resided at Florence, where she died very aged. From family pride, she would suffer no print of Bianca Cappello, who having been mistress of Duke Francis I., became his wife. † A comic opera.

‡ Thomas, afterwards the second Lord Grantham.

§ Resident at Venice; he was of the Isle of Man.

‖ Lady Pomfret had given her husband's collection of statues to the University of Oxford.

P.S. I should be glad Mr. Murray would not name *me*.* Zanetti cheated my father outrageously; he will think we forgive, and have no objection to being cheated.

LETTER XXII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 29, 1762.

I WISH you joy, sir minister; the Czarina† is dead. As *we conquered America in Germany*, I hope we shall overrun Spain by this burial at Petersburg. Yet, don't let us plume ourselves too fast; nothing is so like a Queen as a King, nothing so like a predecessor as a successor. The favourites of the Prince Royal of Prussia, who had suffered so much for him, were wofully disappointed, when he became the present glorious Monarch; they found the English maxim true, that the King never dies; that is, the dignity and passions of the Crown never die. We were not much less defeated of our hopes on the decease of Philip V. The Grand Duke‡ has been proclaimed Czar at the army in Pomerania; he may love conquest like that army, or not know it is conquering, like his aunt. However, we cannot suffer more by this event. I would part with the Empress-Queen, on no better a prospect.

We have not yet taken the galleons, nor destroyed the Spanish fleet. Nor have they enslaved Portugal, nor you made a triumphant entry into Naples. My dear sir, you see how lucky you were not to go thither; you don't envy Sir James Grey,§ do you? Pray don't make any categorical demands to Marshal Botta,‖ and be obliged to retire to Leghorn, because they are not answered. We want allies; preserve us our friend the Great Duke of Tuscany. I like your answer to Botta exceedingly, but I fear the Court of Vienna is shame-proof. The Apostolic and Religious Empress is not a whit a better Christian, not a jot less a woman, than the late Russian Empress, who gave such proofs of her being a *woman*.

We have a mighty expedition on the point of sailing; the destination not disclosed. The German war loses ground daily; however, all is still in embryo. My subsequent letters are not likely to be so barren, and indecisive. I write more to prove there is nothing, than to tell you any thing.

You were mistaken, I believe, about the Grafton's; they do not remove from Turin, till George Pitt¶ arrives to occupy their house there. I am really anxious about the fate of my letter to the

* Zanetti, a Venetian, had been employed by the Regent of France to buy pictures for him; and afterwards by Sir Robert Walpole.

† The Czarini Elizabeth. ‡ Peter III.

§ He had been appointed minister to Spain, but war prevented his going.

‖ Commander in Tuscany.

¶ Appointed minister to Turin; afterwards Lord Rivers.

duchess; I should be hurt if it had miscarried; she would have reason to think me very ungrateful.

I have given your letter to Mr. T. Pitt; he has been very unfortunate since his arrival—has lost his favourite sister in childbed. Lord Tavistock,* I hear, has written accounts of you that give me much pleasure.

I am ashamed to tell you that we are again dipped into an egregious scene of folly. The reigning fashion is a ghost—a ghost, that would not pass muster in the paltriest convent in the Apennine.† It only knocks and scratches; does not pretend to appear or to speak. The clergy give it their benediction; and all the world, whether believers or infidels, go to hear it. I, in which number you may guess, go to-morrow; for it is as much the mode to visit the ghost as the Prince of Mecklenburg,‡ who is just arrived. I have not seen him yet, though I have left my name for him. But I will tell you who is come too—Lady Mary Wortley. I went last night to visit her; I give you my honour, and you, who know her, would credit me without it, the following is a faithful description. I found her in a little miserable bed-chamber of a ready-furnished house, with two tallow candles, and a bureau covered with pots and pans. On her head, in full of all accounts, she had an old black-laced hood, wrapped entirely round, so as to conceal all hair or want of hair. No handkerchief, but up to her chin a kind of horseman's riding-coat, calling itself a pet-en-l'air, made of a dark green (green I think it had been) brocade, with coloured and silver flowers, and lined with furs; boddice laced, a foul dimity petticoat sprig'd, velvet muffeteens on her arms, gray stockings and slippers. Her face less changed in twenty years than I could have imagined; I told her so, and she was not so tolerable twenty years ago that she needed have taken it for flattery, but she did, and literally gave me a box on the ear. She is very lively, all her senses perfect, her languages as imperfect as ever, her avarice greater. She entertained me at first with nothing but the dearness of provisions at Helvoet. With nothing but an Italian, a French, and a Prussian, all men servants, and something she calls an *old* secretary, but whose age till he appears will be doubtful; she receives all the world, who go to homage her as Queen Mother,§ and crams them into this kennel. The Duchess of Hamilton, who came in just after me, was so astonished and diverted, that she could not speak to her for laughing. She says that she has left all her clothes at Venice. I really pity Lady Bute; what will the progress be of such a commencement!

The King of France‖ has avowed a natural son, and given him the estate which came from Marshal Belleisle, with the title of Comte

* Francis Russel, eldest son of the Duke of Bedford.

† The notorious imposition called the Cock Lane Ghost, for an account of which see Bentley's Collective Edition of Horace Walpole's Letters, vol. iv. p. 204.—Ed.

‡ Prince Charles, brother of the Queen.

§ She was mother of Lady Bute, wife of the Prime Minister.

‖ This was a false report.

de Gisors. The mother I think is called Matignon or Maquignon. Madame Pompadour was the Bathsheba that introduced this Abishag. Adieu, my dear sir!

LETTER XXIII.

Arlington Street, Feb. 25, 1762.

We have not written to one another a great while: nothing has happened here very particular of a public nature. Our great expedition under Lord Albemarle is not yet sailed, but waits, I believe, for a card from Martinico, to know how it will be received there. We have another preparing for Lisbon; Lord Tyrawley is to command it. Dunn, a Jacobite Irishman, who married the daughter of Humphrey Parsons,* the brewer, and much in favour at Versailles, is named to counterwork Lord Tyrawley at Lisbon. Just at present we have a distant vision of peace; every account speaks the new Czar disposed to Prussia,—I hope no farther than to help him to a treaty, not to more glory and blood.

We have had an odd kind of parliamentary opposition, composed only of the King's own servants. In short, in the House of Lords the Duke of Bedford made a motion against the German war; but the previous question was put and carried by 105 to 16. Seven of the minority protested. Yet this stifled motion attempted to take root in our House. Young Bunbury,† whom I sent to you, and whom you have lately sent us back, and who is enrolled in a club of chicken orators, notified a day on which he intended to move such a question as had appeared in the Lords. When the day came, no Mr. Bunbury came—till it was too late. However, he pretended to have designed it, and on the 15th appointed himself to make it on the 17th, but was again persuaded off, or repented, and told us he would reserve himself and his objections for the day of the subsidy to Prussia. Nothing was ever more childish than these scenes. To show himself more a man, he is going to marry Lady Sarah Lennox, who is very pretty, from exceeding bloom of youth; but, as she has no features, and her beauty is not likely to last so long as her betrothed's he will probably repent this step, like his motions.

We have one of the Queen's brothers here, Prince Charles; and she herself, I believe, is breeding—a secret that, during the life of old Cosimo Riccardi,‡ would have given you great weight with him.

Our foolish ghost, though at last detected, lasted longer than it was in fashion: the girl made the noises herself; and the Methodists were

* A well-known Jacobite Lord Mayor of London. Mr. Dunn, who married his eldest daughter, took the title of Count O'Dunn.

† He was afterwards Sir Thomas Charles Bunbury.

‡ An old Marquis Riccardi, at Florence, who was very inquisitive about pregnancies, christenings, &c.

glad to have such a key to the credulity of the mob. Our bishops, who do not discountenance an imposture, even in the subdivisions of their religion, looked mighty wise, and only took care not to say any thing silly about it, which, I assure you, considering the capacities of most of them, was a good deal.

You have not sent word to your brother or me what the altar cost. I should much oftener plague you with commissions, if you would draw for them. If you will not, I must totally stop, concluding you had rather bestow your money than your trouble. I have at this moment a job, with which I will make the trial. I have been informed that at Leghorn, the palace (I suppose the Great Duke's) and the front of a church (I don't know which) were designed by Inigo Jones. If you can discover them and ascertain the fact, or great probability of it, I should be glad to have drawings of them; but subject to the conclusion I have stated above. You know I never was at Leghorn, so know nothing of this myself.

I almost wish to stop here, and not relate the cruel story I am going to tell you; for though you are no ways interested for any of the persons concerned, your tender nature will feel for some of them, and be shocked for all. Lord Pembroke, Earl, Lord of the Bed-chamber, Major-General, possessed of ten thousand pounds a-year, Master of Wilton, husband of one of the most beautiful creatures* in England, father of an only son, and himself but eight-and-twenty to enjoy this assemblage of good fortune, is gone off with Miss Hunter, daughter to one of the Lords of the Admiralty,† a handsome girl with a fine person, but silly and in no degree lovely as his own wife, who has the face of a Madonna, and, with all the modesty of that idea, is doatingly fond of him. He left letters resigning all his employments, and one to witness to the virtue of Lady Pembroke, whom he says he has long tried in vain to make hate and dislike him. It is not yet known whither this foolish guilty couple have bent their course; but you may imagine the distress of the earl's family, and the resentment of the house of Marlborough, who doat on their sister: Miss Helen's family too takes it for no honour. Her story is not so uncommon; but did one ever hear of an earl running away from himself?

I have just published a new book, a sort of History of the Arts in England;‡ I will send it you on the first opportunity. Adieu!

LETTER XXIV.

Arlington Street, March 22, 1762.

You have nothing to do but to send for a conquest, and I send it you:

* Lady Elizabeth Spencer, younger sister of George Duke of Marlborough.
† Thomas Orby Hunter. Miss Hunter was afterwards married to a Captain Clarke.
‡ Anecdotes of Painting in England.

Martinico is yours. Victory, it seems, did not expire with George II., nor resign with Mr. Pitt. The whole island was not subdued when the express came away, but little remained to be mastered. In short General Monckton,* by the first despatch, promised it all, and when he has so well kept the greatest part of his word, it would be abominable to doubt the residue. He is a hero in all the forms, eager to engage, and bold to perform. This conquest is entirely owing to his bravery, to his grenadiers, and his sailors, and I don't question but he will achieve the whole, though George Townshend is not there to take the capitulation and the glory out of his mouth.† The great fear was the climate: of that I own I shall be as much afraid when we have got the island, for it cannot be an article of the surrender that the climate should only kill its enemies, not its masters. This is a vast event, and must be signally so to Lord Albemarle, who will find a victorious army ready to sail with him on new exploits; and the Spaniards, I should think, are not more trained than the French, not to be surprised at our hardiness.

Well! I wish we had conquered the world, and had done! I think we were full as happy when we were a peaceable quiet set of tradesfolks, as now that we are heirs-apparent to the Romans, and overrunning East and West Indies. The new Czar seems to admire heroes more than I do; he is quite an enthusiast to the King of Prussia; it may save the latter but wo to the world when such a portion of the globe is in the hands of a man who admires a great general! I can tell you no more of Martinico than you will see in the Gazette, nor little else that is new. Lord Pembroke is quite forgotten. He and his nymph were brought back by a privateer, who had obligations to her father, but the father desired no such recovery, and they are again gone in quest of adventures. The earl was so kind as to invite his wife to accompany them; and she, who is all gentleness and tenderness, was with difficulty withheld from acting as mad a part from goodness, as he has done from guilt and folly.

Your master, Lord Egremont, is dying of an apoplectic lethargy; and your friend Lord Melcombe,‡ will, I believe, succeed him. Your old acquaintance, Mrs. Goldsworthy,§ was t'other night at Bedfordhouse; I never saw her, and wanted to see her, but missed her. Lady Mary Wortley too was there, dressed in yellow velvet and sables, with a decent laced head and a black hood, almost like a veil, over her face. She is much more discreet than I expected, and meddles with nothing—but she is wofully tedious in her narrations.

By this time you have seen my charming duchess.‖ I shall build

* Robert Monckton, brother of the Viscount Galway.

† George Lord Townshend, on the death of General Wolfe, received the capitulation of Quebec.

‡ George Bubb Doddington, Lord Melcombe.

§ Her husband had been Consul at Leghorn.

‖ Anne Duchess of Grafton.

an altar to Pam, for having engaged her, when the house fell at Rome, where she was invited to a concert.

You scold me for going to see the ghost, and I don't excuse myself; but in such a town as this, if a ghost is in fashion, one must as much visit it, as leave one's name with a new Secretary of State. I expect soon that I shall keep Saints' days, for enthusiam is growing into fashion too; and while they are cancelling holidays at Rome, the Methodists are reviving them here. We have never recovered masquerades since the earthquake at Lisbon. Your country is very victorious, but by no means a jot wiser than it was.

I hope, and I think I did not forget to tell you how much I like the altar; you are not apt to neglect a commission, or to execute it ill. My gallery and tribune will be finished this summer, and then I shall trouble you about the brocadella. Mr. T. Pitt has taken a sweet little house just by me at Twickenham, which will be a comfortable addition to my villeggiatura. Adieu!

P.S.—I am sorry for my Florentine friends, that they are losing their good governor, Marshal Botta—there are not many of the species in an Austrian court.

LETTER XXV.

Arlington Street, April 13, 1762.

I AM two letters in your debt, without much capital to pay them. This twilight between parliament and the campaign is not favourable for news. The houses are not prorogued indeed, but the end of a session always languishes, and we actually are adjourned for the holidays; and what is more, for Newmarket. All that was reported of the Czar proves true, but is of consequence only to the King of Prussia; even the conquest of Martinico has not advanced the peace. The other Empress must die too, I believe, before her rage will subside. Portugal cries out for help, and our troops are going thither; but I don't think that every Spanish soldier in the world will march to Lisbon. There are some grumblings in Ireland, which look as if that kingdom would not be quite inactive this summer. A set of levellers there have been committing great disorders for some time, and we think there is a leaven of French officers and Spanish gold among them. Two regiments of dragoons have been ordered against them, and are to be followed by some foot. In short, our enemies must try something, and cannot sit entirely tranquil, while the Havannah is probably following the fate of Martinico. Well! we may make a bad peace at last, and yet keep a good deal!

I don't know how to execute the request made to Palombo* for my father's history, for the *nouvelles litteraires*. I have very slender

* Secretary to sir Horace Mann.

opinion of the capacity of such panegyrists. Anecdotes, which they could not comprehend, and would mangle, are not fit to be dispensed to such shops. All I can do, I think, is to transcribe the principal dates of his life from Collin's Peerage, for there is no good life of him; this, I suppose, would content both Italian writers and readers. If I have time before the post goes out, I will subjoin the extract to this letter, or send it by next mail.

It was very true that Miss Hunter was brought back by a privateer, but her father desired she might be released; so they sailed again. Don't compassionate Lord Pembroke; he is a worthless young fellow. He does nothing but write tender and mournful letters to his charming wife, which distress her, and are intended to draw money from her. He is forgotten here, which is the best thing can happen to him.

How could I not commend the altar? It was just the thing I wished, and, if any thing, prettier than I wished. I would by no means come into the tariff you propose to me between us, if I did not think it would be convenient to you. I wish so much to contribute to your satisfaction in any shape, that if it would facilitate it I would even consent to your paying for your commissions; but then you must take care they are numerous. Your brother James is really a good creature, but he is not your brother Gal.; there was but one he! James has no notion of the delicacies and attentions of friendship,—I hope I have; therefore let me be your factotum. Write to me and employ me without reserve, and you shall prescribe your own terms,—that is, if they are not too much in my favour. To open the intercourse, I desire you will send me the new volume of Herculaneum; it is the third, but only the second of prints. Don't let us balk our wishes, but without ceremony draw bills regularly for the commissions we execute; and paying them shall be all your brother James shall do.

Mr. T. Pitt has taken a small house at Twickenham, within a stone's throw of me. This will add to the comfort of my strawberry-tide. He draws gothic with taste, and is already engaged on the ornaments of my cabinet and gallery. Adieu!

P.S. Here are the notes for my father's eulogium. I fear you will be plagued in translating the terms into Italian. Let them look to the Latin.

Robert Walpole was born at Houghton in Norfolk, August 26th, 1675. He was third son of Robert Walpole of the same same place, but his two elder brothers dying before their father, he succeeded the latter, in 1700, in an estate of above 2000*l.* a-year; and was chosen member of Parliament for Lynn in every Parliament, except in the year 1711, from his father's death till his own admission into the peerage in 1742.

He was extremely in the confidence of the Lord Treasurer Godolphin, and particularly employed by him in drawing Queen Anne's speeches. On the change of the ministry great offers were made to him by Lord Treasurer Oxford, but he adhered steadily to the Whig party, and was so formidable to the Tory administration that they sent him to the Tower; after he had been one of the Council to Prince George in the Admiralty in 1705, Secretary at War in 1707, and Treasurer of the Navy in 1709. In that year he was one of the managers of the House of Commons against Dr. Sacheverel.

On the accession of George the First, he was made Paymaster of the Forces; and in October 1715 was appointed First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer; and the same year was elected Chairman of the Secret Committee appointed to inquire into the conduct of Queen Anne's last administration.

On the differences between the King and Prince of Wales, he followed the latter, and resigned his employments; but in June 1720, he was again made Paymaster of the Forces, and in April 1721 became once more First Lord of the Treasury, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Prime Minister, as he continued during the whole remainder of that reign, and under the successor; and was several times one of the Lords Justices during the absences of those kings.

May 27th, 1725, he was made Knight of the Bath, on the revival of that order; and in the same month of the ensuing year was created Knight of the Garter, the only Commoner who had received such an honour since the restoration of Charles II.

He enjoyed his post of Prime Minister till Feb. 9th, 1742, when the opposition prevailing in Parliament, he resigned his employments, and was created Earl of Orford. His enemies obtained a secret committee to inquire into the last ten years of his administration; but being able to prove no more crimes against him, though he had lost his power, than they could while he held it, he enjoyed to his death that tranquillity and honour that were due to his virtues, services, and age.

He died of the stone, in Arlington Street, March 25th, 1745, aged near seventy. His first wife was Catherine Shorter, by whom he had Robert, his successor, created a baron by George I., and Knight of the Bath; Sir Edward, Knight of the Bath; and Horatio: Catherine, who died unmarried; and Mary, married to George Earl of Cholmondeley, Lord Privy Seal in the reign of George II. Sir Robert married, secondly, Maria Skerret, by whom he had one daughter, Lady Maria, married to Charles Churchill, Esq.

LETTER XXVI.

Arlington Street, April 30, 1762.

Some people think we are going to have peace—whatever we have abroad, it does not increase at home. The ministers are divided;

the old for continuing the German war (take care you don't look back to my letters of last October,) the new for supporting Portugal; neither point is resolved, consequently either will not be over-timely. With much affection for Portugal, and seriously with much commiseration, I cannot entirely lament that Spain is occupied there.¶ [If we quarrel on great chapters, you may be sure we do not agree more on little ones. A new cargo of peers has set much ill-humour afloat, for when large pains are taken to content many, they are sure to offend more. As I neither wished to be a peer, nor to hinder any body else from being one, I can repeat the list without any gall.

Lord Wentworth and Sir William Courtney viscounts, same names.

Lord Milton,	Barons	Milton.
Sir Edward Montagu,		Beaulieu, or Bewley.
Fox Lane,		Bingley.
Vernon of Sudbury,		Vernon.

Lady Caroline Fox, a baroness Lady Holland. Lord Brudenel,* called up to the House of Lords as Lord Montagu. Duke of Newcastle, created Lord Pelham, with reversion to your friend Mr. Pelham; and Lord Egmont,† made Lord Louvain and Holland, and Baron of Enmore.

The Flemish titles of Lord Egmont are very diverting,—I suppose he is descended from one of the three hundred and sixty-five brats of the Countess of Holland. People recollect a pamphlet, published in the reign of James I., called "A Help to Weak Memories," for the use of those who would know *all* the new peers; and they tell a story of a Neapolitan, who being offered a dukedom by the Germans, when they were so profuse of honours at Naples, refused it, unless they would make his footman a duke too; but in this country ten new peerages will at least produce twenty bon-mots. Our war is more serious, and I wish it well finished. It is uncertain whether we will give the King of Prussia a subsidy, or whether he will accept it. The disturbances in Ireland are at least checked; the insurgents are driven into bogs and woods. The French squadron narrowly escaped their fate: sailing to Martinico, they met their own prisoners conducted to France, and steered away; but Rodney soon followed them, with thirteen ships to their eight, and we hope will overtake them; however, it is plain they had not joined the Spanish fleet. The chief of our naval affairs, Lord Anson, is dying at Bath. Indeed, many of our former actors seem to be leaving the stage: Lord Granville is much broken, and Mr. Fox in a very bad state of health; but Lord Egremont is recovered.

Poor Lady Pembroke has at last acted with spirit. Her Lord being ordered to the German army, wrote that he had a mind to

* Eldest son of the Earl of Cardigan.
† John Percival, second Earl of Egmont.

come over first and ask her pardon. To the surprise of her family, and without their instigation, she sent him word that she was surprised he could think of showing himself in England; and, for her part, she never wished to see him, till he should have retrieved his character.

I am very happy, as I told you, in my new neighbour Mr. Pitt; he calls his small house Pallazo Pitti;* which does not look as if he had forgotten you, and sounds pleasantly in my ears. Adieu!

LETTER XXVII.

Arlington Street, May 26, 1762.

WHENEVER I am a little remiss in writing to you, I am sure to make you amends by a revolution. Any body would wait five weeks for a letter, if it was to tell them that the Government was turned topsy-turvy. Not that it is set upon its head now; it has only lost an old tooth that had *bit* all the world. The Duke of Newcastle resigned this morning! Finding, at last, to his great surprise that he had not as much power under this King as under his great-grandfather and grand-father, he is retired, meditating, I suppose, a plan for being prime minister again under this King's son. Of four-and-twenty bishops that he had made, but one expects this restoration: all the rest, hoping to arrive at Canterbury before that æra, took care not to be at his grace's last levee. People think that a little more than want of power had been necessary to make him take this resolution, and that all kind of disgusts had been given to convince him how unwelcome his company was. This is the second revolution in a year and a half—I wish the next struggle be not a little more serious. Lord Bute plays a dangerous game; he is now First Lord of the Treasury, and is to have the Garter to-morrow, with Prince William. The other changes are few, for the Duke of Newcastle's friends *episcopize*, that is, abandon him, or are ordered to remain as they are. Mr. George Grenville is Secretary of State; and Sir Francis Dashwood Chancellor of the Exchequer; Mr. Elliot,† Treasurer of the Chambers. The Navy-board and one or two commissions of the Treasury will be all the other vacancies.

But there is a bigger event to come; the Stocks believe the peace is made, and lift up their heads. It is certain that a very courteous answer is arrived from France; and the monied philosophers, who do not look on danger as wise measures, conclude that unless Lord Bute was sure of peace, he would not have ventured on dismissing the duke. If you should not hear from me soon, you will be persuaded that we are up in arms. I have some fear that Spain is not very pacific; they have begun the siege of Miranda. I used

* Name of the Great Duke's palace at Florence.
† Afterwards Sir Gilbert Elliot.

to expect the King of Prussia at Somerset-house; perhaps now Queen Catherine's* apartment will be inhabited by her great nephews and nieces. I shall have curiosity enough to go and see Infantas, though I have little else left: I have none of that vigour of ambition that has carried on the Duke of Newcastle for five-and-forty years. Three slight fits of the gout have taught me what I believe all the ingratitude of the clergy of Cambridge has not been able to instil into him. I am just recovered of an attack, far from painful, except one day that it was in my head; but even the harbinger of age is sufficient to convince me that retirement is a blessing.

It would look like vanity in me to thank you for attentions, where so much attention is due; and yet I am apt to think you did pay a little homage extraordinary on my account to the Duchess of Grafton. I am pleased you admire her so much, and she tells me how charmed she is with your reception of her. I warned you to expect no great beauty, and yet the more you saw her, did not you like her the more? Her air, and manner, and majesty are quite her own. I must not forget my thanks too for Mr. Morrice—you must have had some satisfaction in talking over the Chute and me with him.

You may imagine that I am anxious to have the peace, and to see Mr. Conway safe in England. I wish it privately and publicly—I pray for an end to the woes of mankind; in one word, I have no public spirit, and don't care a farthing for the interests of the merchants. Soldiers and sailors who are knocked on the head, and peasants plundered or butchered, are to my eyes as valuable as a lazy luxurious set of men, who hire others to acquire riches for them; who would embroil all the earth, that they may heap or squander; and I *dare* to say this, for I am no minister. Beckford† is a patriot, because he will clamour if Guadaloupe or Martinico is given up, and the price of sugars falls. I am a bad Englishman because I think the advantages of commerce are dearly bought for some by the lives of many more. This wise age counts its merchants, and reckons its armies ciphers. But why do I talk of this age?—every age has some ostentatious system to excuse the havoc it commits. Conquest, honour, chivalry, religion, balance of power, commerce, no matter what, mankind must bleed, and take a term for a reason. 'Tis shocking! Good night.

* Catharine of Braganza, after the death of Charles II., lived at Somerset House.

† William Beckford of Jamaica, and Fonthill in Dorsetshire, Alderman of London, and friend of Mr. Pitt.

LETTER XXVIII.

Strawberry Hill, June 20th, 1762.

I SHALL certainly execute your commissions cheerfully, punctually, and on the terms you desire: the Annual Registers, I mean the historic part, are incomparable. The Oratorios, as Mr. Morrice rightly advises, I will choose by proxy; for, as he and you know, I have not only very little music in me, but the company I keep are far from Handelians.

Have you not felt a pang in your royal capacity? Seriously, it has been dreadful, but the danger is over. The King had one of the last of these strange and universally epidemic colds, which, however, have seldom been fatal: he had a violent cough, and oppression on his breast, which he concealed, just as I had; but my life was of no consequence, and having no physicians in ordinary, I was cured in four nights by James's Powders, without bleeding. The King was blooded seven times, and had three blisters. Thank God, he is safe, and we have escaped a confusion beyond what was ever known, but on the accession of the Queen of Scots—nay, we have not even the successor born. Fazakerley,* who has lived long enough to remember nothing but the nonsense of the law, maintained, according to their wise tenets, that as the King never dies, the Duke of York must have been proclaimed King, and then been unproclaimed again on the Queen's delivery. We have not even any standing law for the regency; but I need not paint to you all the difficulties there would have been in our situation.

The new administration begins tempestuously. My father was not more abused after twenty years than Lord Bute is in twenty days. Weekly papers swarm, and like other swarms of insects, sting. The cry you may be sure is on his Scot-hood. Lord Halifax† is made First Lord of the Admiralty, but will keep Ireland for some time, as it will not be necessary to appoint a new Lord-Lieutenant this twelvemonth. He is popular with the merchants, so that at least this promotion does not offend.

Our great expedition were all well at Martinico, and had lost but sixteen men. Lord Albemarle carried thence nine thousand men. We are very sanguine, and reckon the Havannah ours; but we shall not know it at least before the end of next month.

I smiled at your idea of *our war with Spain lying in Portugal, as our war with France does in Germany.* The latter is dormant, and yet I do not think the peace advances. Our allies, the Portuguese, behave wofully. I don't know what spirit Count La Lippe,‡ who is

* Nicholas Fazakerley, Esq., an eminent Tory lawyer.

† George Montagu, third and last Earl of Halifax.

‡ Comte de la Lippe had been born in England, his father and mother being here in the reign of George I.

still here, will transport to them from Westphalia: he is to command the Portuguese, and Lord Tyrawley the English.

This is a diminutive letter, but you excuse duodecimos in summer.

LETTER XXIX.

Strawberry Hill, July 1, 1762.

I NEVER attempt to tell you the first news of a battle in Germany, which must always reach you before it can arrive here and be sent to Florence. I scarcely ought to call it a battle, though it is a victory for us; but the French (to speak in Cibber's* style) have outrun their usual outrunnings. Their camp was ill-guarded, and Prince Ferdinand surprised it. At first their cavalry made a decent show of advancing, but soon turned and fled. Stainville flung three thousand men into a wood to cover their retreat; they were all taken, with above one hundred and forty officers; he himself is believed slain. Our loss was trifling; two hundred and fifty men, a Captain Middleton killed; and Colonel Henry Townshend, a brave spirited young fellow of parts, youngest son of Mr. Thomas Townshend.† The French grenadiers raved against their commanders, who, it is to be hoped, will shift off the blame on each other, quarrel and pass the campaign in altercation. D'Etrees will not make Broglio appear a worse general than Soubize. Lord Granby is much commended. My chief joy arises from knowing Mr. Conway is safe.

Poor Lady Ailesbury is just arrived, and this is the first taste of the peace she promised herself. Unless the French now despair of Germany, where their fairest prospect lay, I should think this action likely to continue the war; and, I don't doubt but Prince Ferdinand hoped it would. He had much ground to regain here, and has now revived the passions of the people, who will not be eager for peace on the morrow of a victory, nor be very reasonable after repeated successes. Lord Bute's situation is unpleasant: misfortunes would remind us of Mr. Pitt's glory; advantages will stiffen us against excepting even such a peace as he rejected; and, I think, two Havannahs lost will not weigh with the Spaniards against their rapid progress in Portugal: the recovery of that diadem will soothe their pride more than any province taken from them will mollify it. The Portuguese behave shamefully; Lord Tyrawley is coming home disgusted with the nomination of Count La Lippe; and in truth I cannot see the wisdom or honour of that measure. If we protect Portugal, is it not more creditable to give them an English commander? And that general was almost a Portuguese, almost naturalized amongst

* Cibber, in the Preface of his "Provoked Husband," said, "Mrs. Oldfield had outdone her usual outdoings."

† Second son of Charles Lord Viscount Townshend.

them, trusted, and beloved there. What do they know of this German? Or can the English soldiery prefer him to their countryman? For though La Lippe was born here, he is a German prince.

I trust very soon to be able to send you a brick, like Harlequin, as a sample of the Havannah we shall have taken. In return, you must make Saunders beat the French and Spanish squadrons.

Poor Hamburgh has tasted of the royal injustice of this age; they have compounded with the King of Denmark for a million. But his is trifling usurpation; commend me to the King of Spain, for violating more ties than were ever burst by one stroke of a sceptre. We have not had a masquerade here these eight or nine years, because there was an earthquake at Lisbon; while that earthquake which fell about the ears of his own sister and her children, could not stop the King of Spain from marching to drive her and them out of the ruins! Montezuma's ghost cannot complain now!

I have ordered all your books, and your brother James has undertaken for the oratorios. There is a ship going, so I would not wait for mere consultation in the choice of them. Handel's best pieces are settled among his sect, and your brother knows more of his followers than I do. I was impatient to have your commission executed, and I know no better way than this.

I am in distress about my gallery and cabinet: the latter was on the point of being completed, and is really striking beyond description. Last Saturday night my workmen took their leave, made their bow, and left me up to the knees in shavings. In short, the journeymen carpenters, like the cabinet-makers, have entered into an association, not to work unless their wages are raised; and how can one complain? The poor fellows, whose all the labour is, see their masters advance their prices every day, and think it reasonable to touch their share. You would be frightened at the dearness of every thing; I build out of economy, for unless I do now, in two years I shall not be able to afford it. I expect that a pint of milk will not be sold under a diamond, and then nobody can keep a cow but my Lord Clive. Indeed your country's fever is almost at the height every way. Adieu!

LETTER XXX.

Strawberry Hill, July 31st, 1762.

I BEGIN this letter to-night, though I don't know when it will set out, for I have a mind it should be a little more complete than I can make it at present. We are at the eve of big events, or in the ob-

security of them; a Prince of Wales, a peace, the Havannah, a revolution in Russia, all to come to light this week!

We know nothing certain, but that we have lost Newfoundland, and that the new opposition have got a real topic, for hitherto they have only been skirmishing with names; however, as all oppositions must improve on the foregoing, the present gives us names at length, which at least is new. Parallels, you know, are the food of all party writings: we have Queen Isabel and Mortimer, Queen Margaret and the Duke of Suffolk, every week. You will allow that abuse does not set out tamely, when it even begins with the King's mother. Last week they were so brutal as to call the Queen *a beggarly duke's daughter;* it is shocking, for she has offended nobody, and is far from being suspected of power; but it was to load the Duke of Suffolk, for making the match. But what say you to a real *Queen Isabel?* We hear from Holland, but the account is very imperfect, that the Czarina has dethroned her husband. That he should be dethroned does not surprise me. He struck extraordinary strokes so fast, that I suppose his head had not much ballast. Her reign, probably, will not be of much longer duration; but I do not believe, that, like her husband, she will fall in love with the King of Prussia. The Czar, in his aunt's time, was reckoned weak; his wife, very sensible and very handsome. Russia puts one in mind of the Seleucidæ and the Constantinopolitan History, the Cleopatras and Irenes; if vast crimes are not in fashion, you see it is only because despotism is generally exploded. Give human nature scope, it can still be sublimely abominable. My prophetic spirit says, that the young Emperor John will come upon the scene again; in the meantime my Lord Buckingham,* who is going ambassador to Petersburgh, may try the remainder of his charms upon the heart of an Empress.

Of all the important events we are expecting, the peace is nearest my heart. We had refused Russians; and this catastrophe, if it is true, will silence the clamour there would have been on that chapter. It delivers the King of Denmark, too, from a storm; for the hero of Prussia, you know, he never was in my litany. In short, we have heard for this week that our peace with France was in a manner made, and that the Dukes of Bedford and Nivernois were ready to be exchanged at Dover. If France has dabbled in this revolution, adieu the olive-branch! Nay, we are told that your Italian King† is rather disposed to put on his old cuirass again, and thinking the Austrians have their hands full, has an eye upon a little more of the Milanese. Nothing will be cleared up, till there is another courier from Muscovy. Their poor ambassador,‡ who is just arrived, has had no letters. He is not only nephew to the Chancellor, but brother to the Czar's mistress. What a region, where Siberia is next door to the drawing-room!

* John Hobart, second Earl of Buckinghamshire.
† Charles Emanuel, second King of Sardinia.
‡ Count Woronzow, father of the present Countess of Pembroke.—Ed.

Mr. Conway has had a little success, which shows, at least, what he is fit for. He was ordered to besiege the Castle of Waldeck, for which Prince Ferdinand was in a hurry; it was impregnable without cannon; he had none, and his powder was spent. He made them believe he was preparing to storm it, and they instantly surrendered. You may be sure this makes me happy, and yet I am impatient to have the peace nip his laurels.

Your friend Lord Melcombe is dead of a dropsy in his stomach, just when the views of his life were nearest being realized. Lady Mary Wortley, too, is departing. She brought over a cancer in her breast, which she concealed till about six weeks ago. It burst, and there are no hopes of her. She behaves with great fortitude, and says she has lived long enough.

Two days ago I saw your nephew Horace; it always gives me pleasure, though a melancholy one; it was increased now, as he is grown much more like to his father. He thinks he shall go to you in about a year; I am eager for it, as I know the tender satisfaction it will give you.

August 4th.

I must send away my letter to night, or it will not be in town time enough for the foreign post to-morrow. The Russian revolution is confirmed; the papers have even produced a declaration of the new Czarina, in which she deposes her husband with the utmost *sang-froid*. I should easily believe it genuine; it is in the style of the age; there is an honest impudence in modern majesty that is delightful. Monarchs scorn plausibility; however, there is one comfort—they level their crimes chiefly against one another. This Muscovite history, as I hear from very good authority, happened thus: The Czar, who was originally supposed impotent, and who, notwithstanding his mistress, seems to have had the modesty of thinking himself so, intended to return his two children upon his wife's hands, and had declared his rival John, his successor. The late Czarina had had the curiosity to see young John, though unknown to him: this had given Peter uneasiness; yet one of his first proceedings was to take the same step. The anecdotes of that court, however, say, that John has had so many drugs given to him as to shatter his understanding extremely. Probably, as our Charles II. said of a foolish popular parson, "John's nonsense suited Peter's nonsense." Peter, intoxicated with brandy and the King of Prussia, had thoughts of divorcing his Empress. She was at Peterhoff, two miles from Petersburgh; the Czar at another villa. An officer, arrived post with a led horse, told the Czarina there was a design against her life; that she had no time to lose; she must fly, or present herself to the army in the city. Pray, Sir Horace, what do ladies in a panic do? To be sure, run into the danger, not from it. Just so acted the Czarina. She trotted away to the capital, threw herself upon the gallantry of the Preobazinsky (or Prætorian) guards who in Russia are the most polite and compassionate cavaliers in the world, and begged they

would—not protect her—but give her the crown. One troop, who have been a little Prusianised, hesitated; the rest thought her request as reasonable as possible, and immediately proclaimed her. The rest of the people, who abhor innovations, and who, consequently, could not pardon the Czar for giving them their liberty, concurred unanimously. Not a word was said in favour of master Fitz-Catherine, who certainly has no right to the diadem, till his mother's no-right devolves to him by her death. The Czar, informed of the chance of scene fled to Cronstad, and embarked. All the royal galleys were sent after him, and he was overtaken. An act of Abdication was presented to him. He signed it, and then made three requests,—for his own life, and for those of his mistress and of a Prussian adjutant who had accompanied him in his flight. Whether the first and last boons were granted, story is hitherto silent; but the next morning, Mademoiselle Woronzow flung herself on her knees before the Czarina, and begged to resign the order of St. Catharine, which she said the Czar had bestowed on her two months ago, and of which she owned herself unworthy,—so, probably, knows the Czarina, who returned the cross and dismissed her. Bestuchef is recalled; somebody, I forgot who, and Schualow,* the late Empress's minion, are the chief ministers.

A civil message has been sent to Mr. Keith†—to the King of Prussia, that he having thirty thousand Russians in his army, which her Majesty wants, she should be glad to have them return; however, as she knows his Majesty's occasions, she permits them to obey his orders till he can spare them. He replied, that by their assistance he had extricated himself from his greatest difficulty, and would send them back immediately. Here ends my first tone. One wants to know the fate of the Czar, of his predecessor and successor John; of Munich, Biron, and all those heroes of former dramas, who, had been recalled from Siberia. One does not want to know what the Empress-Queen feels. She, who devoutly hates every monarch who cannot or will not have children, must be transported. But what seeds are here for more revolutions! If John and Peter never come to light again, the blood-royal of Russia will be extinct, at least be extremely equivocal; and the title of a princess of Anhalt Zerbst to the crown cannot fascinate the eyes of every good Muscovite. As they are compendious in their proceedings, I should think the malcontents would not waste a summer in writing *Monitors* and *North-Russians*.‡

The King of Prussia has certainly driven back Daun, and got between him and Schweidnitz. Prince Ferdinand, too, has obtained another advantage. The accounts came yesterday; no English were engaged; the affair lay between Hessians and Saxons, and

* Count Schualow, favourite of the Empress Elizabeth; but this did not prove true—he was not employed by Catherine II.

† The English minister.

‡ In allusion to North Britons, the famous weekly papers written by Wilkes against Lord Bute.

Stainville is dislodged from his post. The advantage is reckoned considerable. The King of France is impatient to stop the effusion of blood. Choiseul is eager for peace, and the more so, as all his schemes are baffled. That we wish it all Europe knows, but that is not the best secret for obtaining it. Many people think it agreed. I dread this northern tempest.

What a volume is here! and, perhaps, not a syllable of it new to you! You will, at least, excuse the intention. I wish you and I had any common acquaintance left, that we might chat of something else than kings and queens! Adieu!

P.S. The Russian minister here, I am told has received credentials from the new government.

LETTER XXXI.

Arlington Street, Aug. 12th, 1762.

A Prince of Wales was born this morning; the prospect of your old neighbour* at Rome does not improve; the House of Hanover will have numbers in its own family sufficient to defend their crown—unless they marry a Princess of Anhalt Zerbst.† What a shocking tragedy that has proved already! There is a manifesto arrived to-day that makes one shudder! This northern Athaliah, who has the modesty not to name hur murdered *husband* in that light, calls him her *neighbour;* and, as if all the world were savages, like Russians, pretends that he died suddenly of a distemper that never was expeditious; mocks Heaven with pretensions to charity and piety; and heaps the additional inhumanity on the man she has dethroned and assassinated, of imputing his death to a judgment from Providence. In short, it is the language of usurpation and blood, counselled and apologised for by clergymen! It is Brunehault and an archbishop!

I have seen Mr. Keith's first despatch; in general, my account was tolerably correct; but he does not mention Ivan.‡ The conspiracy advanced by one of the gang being seized, though for another crime; they thought themselves discovered. Orloff, one of them, hurried to the Czarina, and told her she had no time to lose. She was ready for any thing; nay, marched herself at the head of fourteen thousand men and a train of artillery against her husband, but not being the only Alecto in Muscovy, she had been aided by a Princess Daschkaw,§ a nymph under twenty, and sister to the Czar's mistress. It was not the latter, as I told you, but the Chancellor's wife, who offered up the order of St. Catherine. I do not know how my Lord Buckingham‖

* The Pretender.
† The Czarina Catherine II. was Princess of Anhalt Zerbst.
‡ Ivan, or John, the former dethroned young Czar.
§ The Princess of Daschkaw.
‖ The English Minister at Petersburgh.—Ed.

feels, but unless to conjure up a tempest against this fury of the north, nothing could bribe me to set my foot in her dominions. Had she been priestess of the Scythian Diana, she would have sacrificed her brother by choice. It seems she does not degenerate; her mother was ambitious and passionate for intrigues; she went to Paris and dabbled in Politics with all her might.

The world had been civilising itself till one began to doubt whether ancient histories were not ancient legends. Voltaire had unpoisoned half the victims to the Church and to ambition. Oh! there never was such a man as Borgia; the league seemed a romance. For the honour of poor historians, the assassinations of the Kings of France and Portugal, majesties still living in spite of Damien and the Jesuits, and the dethronement and murder of the Czar, have restored some credibility to the annals of former ages. Tacitus recovers his character by the edition of Petersburgh.

We expect the definitive courier from Paris every day. Now it is said that they ask time to send to Spain. What? to ask leave to desert them! The Spaniards, not so expeditious in usurpation as the Muscovites, have made no progress in Portugal. Their absurd manifestos appeared too soon. The Czarina and Princess Daschkaw stay till the stroke is struck. Really, my dear sir, your Italy is growing unfashionably innocent,—if you don't take care, the Archbishop of Novogorod will deserve, by his crimes, to be at the head of the *Christian* Church. I fear my friend, good Benedict,* infected you all with his virtues.

You see how this Russian revolution has seized every cell in my head—a Prince of Wales is passed over in a line, the peace in another line. I have not even told you that the treasure of the *Hermione*, reckoned eight hundred thousand pounds, passed the end of my street this morning in one-and-twenty wagons. Of the Havannah I could tell you nothing if I would; people grow impatient at not hearing from thence. Adieu!

You see I am a punctual correspondent when empresses commit murders.

LETTER XXXII.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday, Aug. 29, 1762.

We cannot afford to stay any longer for the Havannah, and must make peace without it. The Duke of Bedford, on Wednesday next, is to be named in form Embassador Extraordinary, as the Duc de Nivernois will be the same day at Paris; on the 7th of next month they are to meet at Dover, cross over and figure in. Our duke carries good dispositions, but as there is a grain of wrong-headed warmth in his temper, I hope it will not leaven the whole pacific cake. Still I fear

* Pope Benedict XIV.

that obstinate diadem in Spain! who will not be bullied as when he was plain Don Carlos King of Naples, and which perhaps he has not forgot. Lord Tyrawley, is returned, and as they were not pleased to see him and English troops in Portugal, when they feared it would draw down the war upon them, he now will not allow there is any war there, calls it a combination to get our money, and says he will eat every man that is killed, if the Portuguese will engage to roast him. Absurd as this proposition is, it is the only tolerable excuse I have heard for the King of Spain. *En attendant*, the signing of preliminaries, we have a victory of the King of Prussia over Laudohn, and a new squabble with the Dutch. They were sending a convoy of naval stores to Cales—to sell underhand; our good allies do not injure us for nothing; Commodore More sent some men-of-war to visit them; their guardian would not be examined, which he intimated by a cannon; a fight ensued, he has lost his nose and his first-lieutenant, and is brought into Portsmouth. This is our story as arrived to-day. The Dutch minister Borel is very temperate about it, though the lost nose belonged to his nephew.

I rejoice that you agree with me in abhorring that good woman the Czarina. Semiramis and her models never thought of palliating murders by manifestos. One would think that Peter the Great had not yet taught the Russians to read! or she could not have the confidence to write such horrid and such gross falsehoods. They are as ill-drawn as if penned in Spain or Portugal. But what do you think of her recollecting herself, crying for her husband, and wanting to attend his funeral? This, and her backward and forward dealing with the King of Prussia, show what confusion subsists in her councils. I do not grieve to hear that as much reigns in her empire. I am impatient to learn that she is in a covered wagon on the road to Siberia.

I condole with you for the misfortune of the Gallery, and the loss of the Laocoon; yet, if a fine statue was to be demolished, it was one that could most easily be spared, as there is a duplicate at Rome, and, as I remember, not only a finer, but a more authentic. But how came the Florentines to see their gallery burn with so much indifference? It was collected by the Medici. If formed by the Lorrainers I should not wonder.

Lady Mary Wortley is dead, as I prepared you to expect. Except some trifling legacies, she has given every thing to Lady Bute, so we shall never know the sum—perhaps that was intended. It is given out for inconsiderable, besides some rich baubles. Another of our old acquaintance at Florence is greatly advanced; Lady Charlotte Finch* is made governess to the Prince; a choice so universally approved that I do not think she will be abused even in the North Briton.

* Second daughter of Thomas Farmer, Earl of Pomfret, and widow of William Finch, Vice-chamberlain, next brother to the Earl of Winchelsea, who was succeeded in the title by her only son.

Mrs. Foote's* friend, Lord Westmoreland, is just dead, from a stroke of the palsy. His countess† is gone to your sister at Linton. His Chancellorship of Oxford will be an object of contention. Lord Litchfield‡ will have the interest of the court, which now has some influence there; yet, perhaps, those§ who would have voted for him formerly, may not now be his heartiest friends.

Oh, when I was talking of the royal child, I should have told you of a delightful card which was sent by Mrs. Salvador and Mrs. Mendez, two rich Jewesses, *to know how the Queen did.* Lady Northumberland, who was in waiting, told the servant that that was not the manner—that they should have come in person to inquire. "That's good," replied the fellow; "why my mistress lies in herself: if she had not, I suppose she would have expected the Queen to send to *her.*"

I will make your compliments to Palazzo Pitti,‖ when I see it; but he has scarce been here; he is not well, and drinking waters at Sunning-Hill.

Thank you for Cocchi's Spectator,¶ I like it better than you shall own to him. With his father's freedom of thinking, he has a great deal of humour; but don't let him pursue it. Wit will be but slender comfort in the prisons of the Inquisition, or in a fortress; more uncomfortable, if his opening the eyes of others leads them into the same situation. If curing old errors would prevent the world from falling into new ones, *à la bonne heure;* but one nonsense is as good as another; better if the change is to be made by blood. A Gustavus Vasa may strike a stroke for liberty, but few men are born to overturn a tyranny with their pen. When established liberty is in danger, then write for it; one may prevent people perhaps from shutting their eyes; 'tis more difficult to unclose them if shut. Nor can it be done when the world is in cold blood; you may snatch a fortunate fermenting minute, but you cannot prepare it. If Cocchi must write, let him come hither; here he may make reeds, say what he will;** but let his own barber remind him that in some countries it is not safe even to trust reeds with one's thoughts. Adieu!

P.S. When I was mentioning acquaintance you have lost, I forgot to name Lady Fane;†† you see nervous disorders are not very mortal; I think she must have been above seventy.

* Mary, sister of Sir Horace Mann.

† Mary Cavendish, Countess of Westmoreland.

‡ George Henry Lee, Earl of Lichfield. § The Jacobites.

‖ Mr. T. Pitt.

¶ Son of Dr. Cocchi, a Florentine Physician and author; the son wrote some Spectators on the model of Addison's.

** Alluding to Midas's barber.

†† Charlotte, sister of James first Earl Stanhope, and mother of Charles, the last Viscount Fane, friend of Sir Horace Mann, and his predecesor at Florence.

LETTER XXXIII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 26, 1762.

Well, my dear sir, we write and write, but we do not take the Havannah or make the peace; I wish the latter may not depend on the former! Lord Albemarle's last letters have not been made public; we do not doubt but there is great sickness among our troops, nor do the Spaniards seem so terrified at the name of an Englishman as the French are. The former proceed in conquering Portugal before our faces; yet we have given them a little check, and I hope a little spirit to the Portuguese. The duchess of Bedford is certainly going to Paris, but we do not expect the difinitive treaty before the Parliament meets. The clamour does not increase, though I do not tell you it abates. One knows not what to believe about the chiefs.

Pitt is said to declare firmly against opposition; others make a salvo for him, unless *in case of a bad peace*. But neither they nor he know what he will do till he is in the middle of his first speech. In the mean time Lord Temple is all flax, tow, pitch, and combustibles. What I do believe is, that Pitt has refused all junction with the Duke of Newcastle, who has certainly contributed most to raise the flame, who is forever at court, and yet ruining himself with more alacrity than ever in entertainments to keep up a party; yet I dare to say he will neither have courage to head an opposition, nor art enough to get to the top again, but will be just troublesome enough to obtain some insignificant post in the Cabinet Council. Somebody said t'other day, "Yet sure the Duke of Newcastle does not want parts;"—"No," replied Lord Talbot, "for he has done without them for forty years." His Grace, Lord Temple, and Lord Bute, met last Wednesday at the installation of the last. The first, when he performed the ceremony, embraced Lord Bute; Lord Temple sat next to him at dinner, but they did not exchange a syllable, and yet I do not esteem habitual virulence more than habitual dissimulation. The pomp was great; the King, Queen, and all the family, but Princess Amelia, (who excused herself from seeing her father's trophies buried) were there: Prince William* was installed too, and it was the King's first appearance to take his stall. The Queen was charmed with Windsor, and they stay there till Tuesday. Pains had been taken to breed a riot, but nothing happened. The Duke de Nivernois was ill, and could not see the ceremony. He is very battered, delicate, and anxious about his health; very plain and little in his person, but with the air of a gentleman, so I hear. I have not seen him, nor have any curiosity; he translated Lord Lyttelton's Dialogues of the Dead, which has not given me much opinion of him.

* William Henry, third son of Frederick Prince of Wales, afterwards Duke of Gloucester.

I did not doubt but such humanity as yours would agree with me about the Czarina—but I grow a little cool upon that subject; I have not named her with abhorrence above seven times this week.

Well, I have seen my Duchess*—you have not returned her as you received her. I was quite struck at seeing her so much altered. She wears no rouge, and being leaner, her features, which never were delicate, seem larger. Then, she is not dressed French, but Italian, that is, over-French. In one point, in which she cannot be improved, she seemed so; being thinner, she looked taller. She spoke of you to my perfect content; and as if I did not know it, told me of all your good-breeding, good-nature, and attention. She had said to a friend of mine that she had something for me from you, but that I should not have it till she saw me. That was but for half an hour, and not at her own house, so she and I both forgot it; was it my letters? I hope not, for she is gone to her father's† in Northumberland, and being doomed never to appear where she is formed to shine, was not at the Installation; nay, will not be in town till December. If she who was so proper for it was not at Windsor, pray do not imagine I was. I saw that show above thirty years ago, and do not, like the Duke of Newcastle, tease every reign with my presence.

Lord Melcombe, except some trifling legacies, has left every thing in his power to a near relation, Mr. Windham; but Eastberry, and the estate are Lord Temple's, who having always threatened to pull down that pile of ugliness when it should be his, is charmed since he has seen it through the eyes of possession. I told you of Lady Mary Wortley's death and will, but I did not then know that, with her usual maternal tenderness, and usual generosity, she has left her son one guinea.

Arlington Street, Monday night, 27th.

This codicil to my letter will not rejoice you. I find here great doubts of the peace; in the city they disbelieve it, and prove their disbelief substantially: the Stocks fall fast. What a scene will follow, if this negotiation breaks off too! What acrimony, if we think ourselves again deluded by France! And does war want new edge? Wretched mortals! more wretched Kings and ministers, who look on lives as on gunpowder, and care not how many barrels they waste of either! Negotiations indeed will fluctuate before they settle. I wish this may be only one of their qualms. Prince Ferdinand too, will not be sparing of the human gunpowder committed to his charge: he will have a match ready in his hand to the last moment to blow up the treaty;—such a blessing is a foreign general, who has a different interest and cannot be called to account! Sure these monarchs and heroes would shudder, if they saw a bill drawn upon them thus:—

* The Duchess of Grafton. † Lord Ravensworth.

Queen of Hungary, debtor to the human species	Millions.
King of Prussia, ditto, . .	do.
King of France, by his stewards . .	do.
King of Spain	Many thousands, do.
Prince Ferdinand, a private gentleman .	Some thousands.
Czarina	Only her own husband.
Total .	Half Europe.

LETTER XXXIV.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 3d, 1762.

I AM now only the peace in your debt, for here is the Havannah. Here it is, following despair and accompanied by glory, riches, and twelve ships-of-the-line; not all in person, for four are destroyed. The booty—that is an undignified term—I should say the plunder, or the spoils, which is a more classic word for such heroes as we are, amounts to at least a million and a-half. Lord Albemarle's share will be about 140,000*l.* I wish I knew how much that makes in *talents*, or *great sesterces*. What to me is better than all, we have lost but sixteen hundred men; *but*, alas! Most of the sick recovered! What an affecting object my Lady Albemarle* would make in a triumph surrounded by her three victorious sons; for she had three at stake! My friend Lady Hervey,† too, is greatly happy; her son Augustus distinguished himself particularly, brought home the news, and on his way took a rich French ship going to Newfoundland with military stores. I do not surely mean to detract from him, who set all this spirit on float, but you see we can conquer, though Mr. Pitt is at his plough.

The express arrived while the Duc de Nivernois was at dinner with Lord Bute. The world says, that the joy of the company showed itself with too little politeness—I hope not; I would not exult to a single man, and a minister of peace; it should be in the face of Europe, if I assumed that dominion which the French used to arrogate; nor do I believe it happened; all the company are not so charmed with the event. They are not quite convinced that it will facilitate the pacification, nor am I clear it will. The city of London will not lower their hopes, and views, and expectations, on this acquisition. Well, if we can steer wisely between insolence from success and impatience for peace, we may secure our safety and tranquillity for many years. But they are *not* yet arrived, nor hear I any thing that tells me the peace will certainly be made. France *wants* peace; I question if she *wishes* it. How his Catholic

* Lady Anne Lenox, youngest daughter of the first Duke of Richmond. George, third Earl of Albemarle; Augustus Keppel, afterwards admiral; and General William Keppel, her three eldest sons, all commanded at the taking of the Havannah.

† Mary Lepelle, widow of John Lord Hervey, and mother of George William, Augustus, and Frederick, all successively earls of Bristol.

royalty will take this, one cannot guess. My good friend, we are not at table with Monsieur de Nivernois, so we may smile at this consequence of the family-compact. Twelve ships-of-the-line and the Havannah!—it becomes people who cannot keep their own, to divide the world between them!

Your nephew Foote has made a charming figure; the King and Queen went from Windsor to see Eton; he is captain of the Oppidants, and made a speech to them with great applause. It was in English, which was right; why should we talk Latin to our Kings rather than Russ or Iroquois? Is this a season for being ashamed of our country? Dr. Barnard, the master, is the Pitt of masters, and has raised the school to the most flourishing state it ever knew.

Lady Mary Wortley has left twenty-one large volumes in prose and verse, in manuscript; nineteen are fallen to Lady Bute, and will not see the light in haste. The other two Lady Mary in her passage gave to somebody in Holland, and at her death expressed great anxiety to have them published. Her family are in terrors lest they should be, and have tried to get them: hitherto the man is inflexible. Though I do not doubt but they are an olio of lies and scandal, I should like to see them. She had parts, and had seen much. Truth is often at bottom of such compositions, and places itself here and there without the intention of the mother. I dare say in general, these works are like Madame del Pozzo's* *Memoires*. Lady Mary had more wit, and something more delicacy; their manners and morals were a good deal more alike.

There is a lad, a waiter at St. James's coffee-house, of thirteen years old, who says he does not wonder we beat the French, for he himself could thrash Monsieur de Nivernois. This duke is so thin and small, that when minister at Berlin, at a time that France was not in favour there, the King of Prussia said, if his eyes were a little older, he should want a glass to see the ambassador. I do not admire this bon-mot. Voltaire is continuing his universal history; he showed the Duke of Grafton a chapter, to which the title is, *Les Anglois vainqueurs dans les Quartres Parties du Monde*. There have been minutes in the course of our correspondence when you and I did not expect to see this chapter. It is bigger by a quarter than our predecessors the Romans had any pretensions to, and larger than I hope our descendants will see written of them, for conquest, unless by necessity, as ours has been, is an odious glory; witness my hand H. WALPOLE.

P.S. I recollect that my last letter was a little melancholy; this to be sure, has a grain or two of national vanity; why, I must own I am a miserable philosopher; the weather of the hour does affect me.

* Madame del Pozzo, an Italian lady, who for a short time had been mistress of the Regent of France, was celebrated for her wit, which was extremely coarse and indelicate, and was infamous for her debaucheries and abusive language. She wrote *Memoires* of her life, in which she had spoken so scandalously of Elizabeth Farnese Queen Dowager of Spain, that the latter employed persons to seize her and force them from her. Mr. Walpole knew her at Florence.

I cannot here, at a distance from the world and unconcerned in it, help feeling a little satisfaction when my country is successful; yet, tasting its honours and elated with them, I heartily, seriously wish they had their *quietus*. What is the fame of men compared to their happiness? Who gives a nation peace gives tranquillity to all. How many must be wretched, before one can be renowned! A hero bets the lives and fortunes of thousands, whom he has no right to game with: but, alas! Cæsars have little regard to their fish and counters.

Arlington Street, Oct. 4th.

I find I have told you an enormous lie,* but luckily I have time to retract it. Lady Mary Wortley has left nothing like the number of volumes I have said. At the installation I hear Charles Townshend said they were four—last Thursday he told me twenty-one. I seldom do believe or repeat what he says—for the future I will think of these twenty-one volumes.

There has been a disagreeable bloody affair in Germany. Soubize sent Lord Granby word that he hoped soon to embrace him—in two days they cannonaded us. It was entirely a cannonading affair, but it lasted fourteen hours, and cost them between two and three thousand men. We have lost between seven and eight hundred, with fourteen officers of the Guards killed and wounded. Prince Ferdinand, who either suspected the *Danaos*, or had a mind his army should, gave it out in orders that the whole army should be upon their guard. If our amity begins thus, how will it end?

LETTER XXXV.

Strawberry-Hill, Oct. 20, 1762.

A NEW revolution has happened, which perhaps has not struck you as such, from what little has appeared in the papers. Mr. Grenville,† Secretary of State, and Lord Halifax, first Lord of the admiralty, have changed places. "Well!" say you foreigners, "and do you call that a revolution? Sure, you English are not accustomed to great events, violent catastrophes, when you look on two ministers crossing over and figuring-in, as a revolution? Why, in Russia, a wife murders her husband, seizes the crown—" Stay, my good sir: we do not strangle the Ten Commandments every time there is to be an alteration in the state; but, have a little patience, and you will find these removes not quite so simple as you imagine. Mr. Grenville,

* It was true that Lady Mary Wortley did leave seventeen volumes of her works and memoires. She gave her letters from Constantinople to an English clergyman in Holland, who published them; and, the day before she died, she gave him those seventeen volumes, with injunctions to publish them too; but, in two days, the man had a crown-living from Lord Bute, and Lady Bute had the seventeen volumes.

† George Grenville, next brother of Richard Earl Temple.

besides holding the Seals, was something else was not he? Have you never heard of "Manager in the House of Commons?" or, what defines it better, had the *management* of the House of Commons. This, Lord Halifax, being in the Lords, cannot execute—if he could, Lord Bute would perform it himself. "Well," you cry, "and who is to do it?" I will tell you presently—let us despatch Mr. Grenville first. Three explanations are given—the majority, of which number for once am I, say, he had qualms on the peace, could not digest such good terms as have been offered to France. Another set, no friends of Mr. Grenville, suspect some underhand dealings with his brother and Mr. Pitt. This I, who have a very good opinion of Grenville, do not believe. At most, I will allow him to have been afraid of signing the treaty. The third opinion held by some of Lord Bute's friends, at least, given out by them, though not by himself, who imputes only timidity to Mr. Grenville, whisper, that the latter wanted the *real** power of the House of Commons, and did not notify this ambition, till he thought the nearness of the Parliament would oblige his demands to be accorded. I have many reasons for disbelieving this. In the first place, the service was forced upon him, not sought; in the next, considering what steps have been taken for sole power, he could not expect it. In the last, the designation of his successor proves this was not fact, as Lord Bute must still have thought Mr. Grenville a less formidable substitute than the person he has been obliged to embrace—in short, Mr. Fox is again Manager of the House of Commons, remaining Paymaster and waiving the Seals; that is, will defend the treaty, not sign it. This wants no comment.

I see your impatience again—what, is the treaty then made? No—shall I tell you more? I mean my private opinion; it will not be made. Not for want of inclination here, nor in the ambassador at Paris—but I do not believe we can get it. Does that horrid and treacherous carnage, *cannonading* they call it, look like much sincerity on the French side? But the Spaniards will not accede. Have not I always, told you, I was persuaded that the crown of Portugal reannexed had more charms in the proud eye of Spain than the Havannah in the eye of their interest? Mr. Stanley is indeed going directly after the Duke of Bedford—for what I know not. I do not expect much from it.

This is the state of the day. If you ask what is to follow, I answer, confusion; and the end of the war removed to the Lord knows when. When the administration totters in four months,—when the first breach is made within the walls, not from without, is such a citadel impregnable? But if new armies, unexpected armies, join the enemy! nay, I do not tell you the Duke of Newcastle has joined Mr. Pitt; on the contrary, the world says the latter has haughtily rejected all overtures. But, pray, did not the patriots and the Jacobites concur in every measure against my father, whatever were their different ends? That an opposition, much more formidable than is yet known, will appear,

* Grenville proved a very ambitious man, and grew early though secretly an enemy of Lord Bute, as appeared afterwards.

is very probable; and that Mr. Fox, so far from bringing any strength, except great abilities, to Lord Bute's support, will add fuel to the flame is, I think, past doubt. Unpopularity heaped on unpopularity does not silence clamour. Even the silly Tories will not like to fight under Mr. Fox's banner.

Upon the whole, I look on Lord Bute's history as drawing fast to a conclusion. So far from being ready to meet the Parliament, I shall not be surprised if they are not able to meet it, but throw up the cards before they begin to play them. My hopes of peace are vanished! Few disinterested persons would be content with so moderate a one as I should; yet I can conceive a peace with which I should not be satisfied. Yet if the time comes when you hear me again lamenting a glorious war, do not think me fickle and inconsistent. Had that happy stroke of a pen been struck last year, when we might have had a reasonable peace, we should not now be begging it, nor be uncertain whether we are not to be at last magnificently undone.

I believe I have made a great blunder. I told you the Duchess of Grafton said she had something for me from you, but would not deliver it till she saw me. You, I hooked into this, I do not know how. Lady Mary Coke arrived from Paris at the same time, and brought me a snuff-box, which she would not send, but give me herself. I had been inquiring about both, and interpreted of the duchess what related to Lady Mary. So I have answered your surprise before I receive it.

My nephew, Mr. Keppel,* is made Bishop of Exeter. How reverently ancient this makes me sound! my nephew the bishop! Would not one think I was fourscore? Lady Albemarle; there is a happy mother! Honours military and ecclesiastic raining upon her children! She owns she has felt intoxicated. The moment the King had complimented the Duke of Cumberland on Lord Albemarle's success, the duke stepped across the room to Lady Albemarle, and said, "If it was not in the drawing-room, I would kiss you." He† is full as transported as she is.

Princess Augusta is certainly to marry the young hero of Brunswick.‡ In Portugal it goes wofully. Count La Lippe has been forced to cut the sash from the breast of a Portuguese general officer for cowardice. I suppose, however, that they will have honour enough left to stab him privately for it! Carvalho's§ situation is beyond description; when our generals go to confer with him, they find a guard at every door of every room in his house; bolts and bars are unlocked before they can arrive at him; he is forced to keep himself as he would secure the head of the Jesuits. I expect very soon to see the Portuguese royal family at Somerset-house. Adieu!

* Frederick, the fourth son of William Anne second Earl of Albemarle, married Laura, eldest daughter of Sir Edward Walpole.

† George Lord Albemarle, the conqueror of the Havannah, was the chief favourite of William Duke of Cumberland.

‡ Charles, hereditary Prince, and afterwards Duke of Brunswick.

§ The famous Prime Minister of Portugal.

LETTER XXXVI.

Arlington Street, Nov. 9, 1762.

I now pay my last debt to you, for I send you the peace. It arrived at three o'clock yesterday morning, and was signed on the third; includes Spain, saves Portugal, and leaves the hero and heroine* of Germany to scratch out one another's last eye. I do not pretend to minute the particulars to you; you will have heard them from France before you can have received them from me. Nay, I do not know them exactly. Florida for the Havannah is the chief thing mentioned; so Spain pays a little for the family-compact, besides the loss of her ships, and disappointment of the Crown of Portugal. I believe she relinquished her prospect of the latter to save that of Naples; a bombarding fleet was destined thither. The ministry affect to talk highly of their peace, though I think they are not very proud of it. The city condemns it already by wholesale, and will by retail. Mr. Pitt says it is inadequate to our successes, and inglorious for our allies; the gentlest words I suppose he will utter. For my part, who knows nothing of the detail, I can but rejoice that peace is made. The miserable world will have some repose, and Mr. Conway is safe. I own I have lived in terror about him.

Coupled with the consequences of the peace will be two great events that have lately happened to one considerable person, and which have occasioned much surprise. The Duke of Devonshire,† who has been fluctuating between his golden key and disgust, ever since the Duke of Newcastle's fall, came from the Bath last Thursday se'nnight; prepared to resign, if ill received. He went directly to court and bid the page in waiting tell the King he was there. A flat answer that the King would not see him was returned. He sent in again to know what he must do with his key and staff,—reply: he should receive the King's orders about them. He went directly to Lord Egremont's‡ and left them there. On the following Wednesday the King in council called for the Council-book, and ordered the Duke's name to be struck out of it:—a proceeding almost novel, having never happened but to Lord Bath§ and Lord George Sackville. There are but faint reasons given for so ignominious a treatment, as his not coming out to council when summoned, &c., but the political cause assigned is, to intimidate the great lords, and prevent more resignations which were expected. Hitherto in that light it has succeeded, for Lord Rockingham‖ alone has quitted. It is very amusing to me to see the House of Lords humbled. I have long beheld their increasing power with concern, and though not at all wishing to see the higher scale preponderating, I am convinced nothing

* The King of Prussia and the Empress Queen.
† W. Cavendish, fourth Duke of Devonshire, Lord Chamberlain.
‡ Secretary of State. § W. Pulteney, Earl of Bath.
‖ Charles Wentworth, Second Marquis of Rockingham.

but the Crown can reduce the exorbitance of the peers, and perhaps it will be able; for I believe half those who are proud of twenty-thousand pounds a-year, will bear any thing for a thousand more.

I forgot when I named only Lord Rockingham; the duke's brother and brother-in-law, Lord George Cavendish and Lord Besborough* resigned their places immediately. None of them but the Marquis of Rockingham in the Bed-chamber are yet filled up.

I am an honester prophet than most of my profession. I record my blunders. I foretold that this ministry would not be able to open the Parliament. See how fair I am; I do not pretend that I only meant on the eleventh—it is put off to the twenty-fifth, and yet I do not brag of the event verifying my prediction. As the peace is come they must abide it; and probably will be able to carry it through—and yet they will have to fight their way. The Duke of Newcastle certainly—by certainly I only mean to answer for his resolution at this instant—goes into opposition. Lord Hardwicke, it is said, will accompany him—if he does, I shall not think Lord Bute's game so sure; that is, I have no notion of Yorkes in opposition without a moral assurance of success. If the *man* Hardwicke comes out of the weather-house, it will certainly be a stormy season.

I write shortly, for I am in a hurry; but my letter, rolled out, would make a very large one. Your own comments will make it last you some time. In short, more than one die is cast. I am returning to Strawberry for some days, rejoiced that my friends are secure; and for events, let them come as they may. I have nothing to do to be glad or sorry, whatever happens ministerially, and do not know why one may not *see* history with the same indifference that one *reads* it. Adieu!

P.S. I wish you would trouble yourself to inquire at Rome whether the mould of the Livia Mattei, made by Valery for my mother's† statue, exists. My cast is broken through and through, and the plaster too rotten to be repaired or to last. If existing, will you inform yourself to how much a cast in bronze would amount? If it would pass my pocket, I must be glad of another cast.

LETTER XXXVII.

Arlington Street, Nov. 30, 1762.

As the Parliament is met, you will naturally expect to hear much news; but, whatever disposition there may be to create novelties, nothing has yet happened of any importance. One perceives that the chiefs of the opposition have not much young blood in their veins. The first day of the session was remarkable for nothing but the absence of the leaders; Mr. Fox had vacated his seat, and Mr. Pitt

* William Ponsonby, second Earl of Besborough.
† On her monument at Westminster Abbey.

was laid up with the gout, as he still continues. But, if the generals want fire, the troops do not: Lord Bute was in great danger from the mob, was hissed and pelted, and, if the guards had not been fetched, would probably have fared still worse. The majority is certainly with the court; the nation against it. The Duke of Cumberland, who has entirely broken with Mr. Fox, has had a conference of four hours with Mr. Pitt. Hitherto it has produced nothing.

As wishing well to Mr. Fox, I can but be sorry he has undertaken his new province, to which his health is by no means equal. I should think the probability of his death must alarm the court, who owe their present security entirely to him, and would not meet with much quarter from Mr. Pitt, the Duke of Devonshire, or the greater duke.* The resentment of the last I guess to be the bitterest of all. For the Duke of Newcastle, he only makes one smile as usual, to see him frisking while his grave is digging. Contests for power and struggles of faction have long served only to divert me. I wish I thought the present tempest would end like all others I have seen, in gratifying the dirty views of particulars; they would have their pay, and we should be quiet for a season. I don't take that to be entirely the case at present.

The Duke of Marlborough is Lord Chamberlain; Lord Northumberland, Chamberlain to the Queen and Cabinet Counsellor. Other places vacated by resignations are not yet filled up; but it is known that Mr. Morice whom you have lately seen, is to be Controller of the Household. Your old friend, Lord Sandwich, goes ambassador to Spain. Another of your friends is dead, Lord Corke; and another has desired me to say much to you from him—Lord Stormont: he is a particular favourite with me.

Mr. Conway stays to conduct home the troops: as it will be above six weeks before I see him, I should be sorry if I did not envy any body that is at a distance from these bustles. I am particularly glad that he is so, for it is not every man who has resolution enough to meddle so little in them as I do. Lord Granby is impatiently expected: it is not certain what part he will take, and, with his unbounded popularity, it cannot be indifferent. The most tempting honours have been offered to him; but, however it is, even Lord Hardwicke has resisted temptations—very lucrative temptations! Yet I do not brag of the virtue of the age; for, if there are two Fabricii, there are two hundred Esaus.

There is come forth a new state coach, which has cost 8,000*l.* It is a beautiful object, though crowded with improprieties. Its supports are Tritons, not very well adapted to land-carriage; and formed of palm-trees, which are as little aquatic as Tritons are terrestrial. The crowd to see it on the opening of the Parliament was greater than at the coronation and much more mischief done.

The Duchess of Grafton has given me the drawing of the Casino

* The Duke of Cumberland.

at Leghorn by Inigo Jones. It is very pretty: was not I to have a church by him too?

The Duchess of Bedford has sent to Lady Bolingbroke* a remarkably fine enamelled watch, to be shown to the Queen. The Queen desired her to put it on, that she might see how it looked—and then said, it looked so well, it ought to remain by Lady Bolingbroke's side, and gave it her. Was not this done in a charming manner?

George Selwyn, of whom you have heard so much, but don't know, is returned from Paris, whither he went with the Duchess of Bedford. He says our passion for every thing French is nothing to theirs for every thing English. There is a book published, called the Anglomanie. How much worse they understand us, even than we do them, you will see by this story. The old Marechale de Villars gave a vast dinner to the Duchess of Bedford. In the middle of the dessert, Madame de Villars called out, "Oh, Lord; they have forgot! yet I bespoke them, and I am sure they are ready! you English love hot rolls—bring the rolls." There arrived a huge dish of hot rolls, and a sauce-boat of melted butter. Adieu!

LETTER XXXVIII.

Arlington Street, Dec. 20, 1672.

I RECEIVED your letter for the Duchess of Grafton, and gave it to her last night. She was so pleased with your good-breeding and compliments, that she made me read it. Her duke is appearing in a new light, and by the figure he makes will probably soon be the head of the opposition, if it continues; though the vast majority on the preliminaries will probably damp it extremely. In the Lords there was no division; in the Commons, 319 to 65. Such a triumphancy in the Court will not be easily mastered. To-day has been execution-day; great havoc is made amongst the Duke of Newcastle's friends, who are turned down to the lowest offices.

This is a want of moderation after victory, which I, who never loved the House of Pelham, cannot commend. He cannot indemnify his friends; and I am not apt to think he would if he could. Some of them, who had the same doubt, took care not to put this last ingratitude in his power, but abandoned him. I missed a scene that would have pleased me. The Chancellor† abused the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Hardwicke unmercifully, though the latter moves mighty slowly towards opposition, and counts his purse over at every step. I have so often seen unbounded subservience to those two men in the House of Lords, that it would have pleased me to witness their defeat on the same spot, and—there I have done with

* Lady Diana Spencer, eldest daughter of Charles Duke of Marlborough, wife of Frederic St. John Viscount Bolingbroke, and one of the Ladies of the Bed-chamber to the Queen.

† Lord Northington.

it. It is an angry opposition, but very dull; does not produce a lively ballad or epigram.—I have even heard but one bon-mot of its manufacture, and that was very delicate and pretty. They were saying that every body, without exception, was to be turned out that the Duke of Newcastle had brought in; somebody replied, "Save the King."

For twenty years I have been looking at parties, factions, changes, and struggles; do you wonder I am tired, when I have seen them so often acted over, and pretty much by the same *dramatis personæ?* Yet I wish I had no worse reason for not enjoying the repetition. I am not only grown old (though I find that is no reason with the generality, for I think all the chiefs are very Struldbrugs† in politics) but my spirits are gone.

It is always against my will when I talk of my health, and I have disguised its being out of order as long as I could; but since the fit of the gout that I had in the spring, and whose departure I believe I precipitated too fast, I have had a constant pain in my breast or stomach. It comes like a fever at six in the morning, proceeds to a pain by the time I rise, and lasts with a great lowness of spirits till after dinner. In most evenings I am quite well. I am teased about my management of myself. I abhor physicians, and have scarce asked a question of one; my regimen is still more condemned; but I act by what I find succeeds best with me. You will be surprised when I tell you, that though I think my complaint a flying gout, I treat it with water and the coldest things I can find, except hartshorn; fifty drops of the latter, and three pears are my constant supper, and my best nights are when I adhere to this method. I thought for three weeks I had cured myself, but for these last ten days I have been rather worse than before. In short, what I hope you will not dislike, though you will be sorry for the cause, I am thinking seriously of a journey to Italy in March. Much against my inclinaton, I own, except for the pleasure of seeing you.

Strawberry, which I have almost finished to my mind, and where I mean to pass the greatest part of the remainder of my life, pulls hard. I shall decide in a few days whether I shall set out, or first try Bath or Bristol. The two latter, except for the shortness of the time, are much more against my inclination than going abroad; but I have talked too much of myself; let us come to you. I am heartily glad Mr. Mackenzie is your friend; he is a man of strict honour, and will be so if he professes it. I do not know what to advise about Naples. You know I always repeat my father's maxim "Quieta non movere." Besides, should you like it?. After so many years, would you care to tap a new world, a new set of acquaintance? But I am a bad councellor: my aversion to embarking in new scenes, not early in one's life, is, I find it, particular; few think themselves so old as I do at five-and-forty; nor would I give myself for a rule to any man else. My bidding adieu to the world already (I

† A race of people (invented by Swift) who never die. See Gulliver's Travels.—Ed.

do not mean by a formal retreat, of which one always grows tired, and which one makes a silly figure by quitting again) is not a part for every body; for I never had any ambition, and though much love for fame, I very near despise that as much too now. Youth is the only real season for joy, but cannot, and surely should not be pushed a moment beyond its term—but this is moralizing! If Mr. Mackenzie could send you to Naples, he can keep you at Florence. Continue to secure him. Try to be useful to the King in his love of *virtù*. I counselled this from the first minute of his reign.

If you choose to try for Naples, I cannot dissuade it; nor can the solicitation hurt you whether it succeed or not. Whatever you wish I wish heartily. I have long made myself of too little consequence to contribute any thing to my friends but wishes. Adieu! my dear sir.

P.S. It is very true, I had the jesse of my mother's statue, but, as I told you, it is so rotten and crumbling that I want another.

LETTER XXXIX.

Arlington Street, Jan. 28, 1763.

I AM a slatternly correspondent when I have nothing to say. When that is the case, I like you should understand it by my silence, rather than give a description of a vacuum.

The peace, which has hitched and hobbled, draws, they say, to a conclusion. The opposition died in the birth. All is quiet, but a little paper-war, which is pungent enough, but no citadel was ever taken by pop-guns.

Shall you be glad or sorry that my post-chaise is not at the door bound for Florence? For me you will rejoice, as I trust you will be a little disappointed on your own account, though I have been so often bound for Italy, that perhaps you did not expect me even now. For this month we have had a most severe frost, which kills every body else, and cures me. In short, I am so much better since the cold weather set in, that it has almost persuaded me that my complaint was nervous and not gouty; and, consequently, if Greenland suits me, Naples would not: however, I am come to no decision. I await the thaw before I shall know what to think; still extremely disposed to an Italian voyage, if Strawberry would give its consent.

This winter has produced no ghost, no new madness. I fear Monsieur de Nivernois will think we have been scandalized, and that we are quite a reasonable people; but he, too, must wait for the thaw!

I have nothing to send you more but the enclosed lines on Lord Granville,* which I wrote last year. The picture is allowed to be so like, that you, who could scarcely be acquainted with him, will

* These lines on John Earl Granville got into print, and, therefore, are not repeated here.

know it, Adieu! I am sorry tranquillity and the post agree so ill together!

LETTER XL.

Arlington Street, March 4, 1763.

It is an age since I wrote to you, but I told you that the conclusion of the war would leave our correspondence a little dry. The peace is now general, and the King of Prussia, who has one life more than Rominagrobis the monarch of the cats had, lights upon all his legs. He has escaped an hundred battles, and what was more threatening, three angry Empresses,* of whom one,† at least, is not tender of sovereign lives. If he does not write his own history, I shall not rejoice much for him; yet now he will have managements; he will not be quite so frank, as in the middle of his career and anger. Besides, his objects will have shifted so often, that his Memoires, like the Duchess of Marlborough's, will vary continually from his first impressions. There is no change in the scene at home. The opposition has proved the silliest that ever was, and has scarcely even pretensions to the title. There have been more hostilities at the playhouses, than between any thing that calls itself party. Both theatres have been demolished on the inside.‡ The cause was, the managers refusing to take half prices after the second act; and with good reason; considering how every thing is advanced in dearness, it is hard on them to be stinted to primitive tolls. The managers have submitted; but the King's Bench, where some of the rioters are to be tried, is not likely to be so acquiescent.

The Duchess of Hamilton, who was thought in a deep consumption like her sister Coventry, has produced a son, and, according to the marvellous fortune attending those two beauties, will probably be mother of the two dukes,§ whose rival houses so long divided Scotland. Lord Bath's history winds up in a more melancholy manner. After preserving his only son Lord Pulteney, through the course of the war, he has just lost him by a putrid fever at Madrid, as he was returning from Portugal. That enormous wealth, heaped up with so little credit, is left without an heir!

I saw yesterday a magnificent service of Chelsea china, which the King and Queen are sending to the Duke of Mecklenburgh. There are dishes and plates without number, an epergne, candlesticks, salt-sellers, sauce-boats, tea and coffee equipages; in short, it is complete;

* Elizabeth and Catherine of Russia, and Maria Theresa of Germany.

† The Czarina Catherine.

‡ These riots commenced at Drury Lane Theatre, on the 26th of January in this year, in consequence of the prices of admission having been raised by Mr. Garrick.—Ed.

§ Hamilton and Argyll.

and costs twelve hundred pounds! I cannot boast of our taste; the forms are neither new, beautiful, nor various. Yet Sprimont, the manufacturer, is a Frenchman. It seems their taste will not bear transplanting. But I have done; my letter has tumbled from the King of Prussia to a set of china; *encore passe*, if I had begun with the King of Poland, *ce Roy de Fayence*,* as the other called him. Adieu!

LETTER XLI.

Strawberry Hill, April 10, 1763.

At a time when the political world is in strange and unexpected disorder, you would wonder that I should be here, and be so for some days; but I am come on a very melancholy occasion. Lord Waldegrave† is just dead of the small-pox, and I have brought my poor unhappy niece‡ hither till he is buried. He was taken ill on the Wednesday, the distemper showed itself on the Friday, a very bad sort, and carried him off that day se'n-night. His brother and sister were inoculated, but it was early in the practice of that great preservative, which was then devoutly opposed; he was the eldest son, and weakly. He never had any fear of it, nor ever avoided it. We scarce feel this heavy loss more than it is felt universally. He was one of those few men, whose good-nature silenced even ill-nature. His strict honour and consummate sense made him reverenced as much as beloved. He died as he lived, the physicians declaring that if any thing saved him, it would be his tranquillity: I soon saw by their ignorance and contradictions that *they* would not. Yet I believe James's powder would have preserved him. He took it by my persuasion, before I knew what his disorder was. But James was soon chased away, to make room for regular assassins. In the course of the illness nobody would venture to take on them so important a hazard as giving the powder again; yet in his agonies it was given, and even then had efficacy enough to vomit him; but too late! My niece has nothing left but a moderate jointure of a thousand pounds a-year, three little girls, a pregnancy, her beauty, and the testimonial of the best of men, who expressed no concern but for her, and who has given her as much as he could, and ratified her character by making her sole executrix. Her tenderness, which could not be founded on any charms in his person, shows itself in floods of tears, in veneration for his memory, and by acting with just such reason and propriety as he would wish her to exert; yet it is a terrible scene!

* From the manufacture of porcelain at Dresden.

† James, second Earl of Waldegrave, Knight of the Garter, Governor of George III. when Prince of Wales, Teller of the Exchequer and Warden of the Stannaries, married Maria, second daughter of Sir Edward Walpole, Knight of the Bath, Mr. Walpole's eldest brother.

‡ Lady Waldegrave.

She loses in him a father, who formed her mind, and a lover whose profusion knew no bounds. From his places his fortune was very great —that is gone! From his rank and consideration with all parties, she was at the summit of worldly glory—that is gone too! Four short years were all their happiness. Since the death of Lady Coventry, she is allowed the handsomest woman in England; as she is so young, she may find as great a match and a younger lover—but she never can find another Lord Waldegrave!

Yesterday, when her brother-in-law, the Bishop of Exeter, came hither to acquaint her with the will, and we were endeavouring to stop the torrent of her tears, by observing how satisfactory it must be to her to find what confidence her lord had placed in her sense and conduct, she said, charmingly, "Oh! I wish he had ever done one thing I could find fault with!" The trial is great and dismal. She is not above three months gone with child, and is to pass seven more in melancholy anxiety, to have a labour without a father, perhaps another girl, or a son, whose chance of life will be a constant anxiety to her.

The same day that put an end to Lord Waldegrave's life gave a period too to the administration of Lord Bute, his supplanter, whom he did not love, and yet whom he could hardly hate, for aversion was not in his nature; nor did ever any man who had undertaken such a post as governor to a prince with the utmost reluctance, and who could not have been totally void of the ambition which must have attended such a charge when once accepted, feel less resentment at the disappointment; but I will say no more on Lord Waldegrave, for I forget that you never knew him, and have kept you for above two pages in suspense. Ill health, antecedent determination of retirement, and national antipathy to him, are pleaded as the motives to Lord Bute's sudden resignation, which was not known, nay, not suspected, till two days before it happened. Leave out the two first causes, which are undoubtedly false, and call the third by its true name, panic, and you have the whole secret of this extraordinary revolution. It is plain, that if Mr. Pitt had headed the opposition sooner, or that the opposition had had any brains without him, this event would have happened earlier. A single fortnight of clamour and debate on the Cyder Tax, copied from the noise on the Excise in my father's time, and adopted into petitions from the city, frightened this mighty favourite out of all his power and plans, and has reduced Mr. Fox to take almost the same steps, though he, too, has an intended project of retirement to plead; but he keeps his place, takes a peerage, and goes to France. Lord Bute keeps nothing but the King's favour, and that, too, he is not to use. He will be wise to adhere to this measure, now he has taken the other, lest necessity should prescribe instead of option.

I suppose you by this time conclude, that when Lord Bute quitted the King, he sent the keys of St. James's and Buckingham-house to Mr. Pitt. Stay a little—we are to have another episode of a summer administration first, for you find we do not wear the same suits

in both seasons. Mr. Grenville is to be First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer; Charles Townshend at the head of the Admiralty, and Lord Shelburne of the Board of Trade. Sir Francis Dashwood, in recompense for the woful incapacity he has shown, goes into the House of Lords, and is to succeed in the great Wardrobe to Lord Gower, who again takes the Privy Seal, as the Duke of Bedford is to be President of the Council. Lord Hertford is named for Paris, and Lord Stormont for Vienna; the Duke of Marlborough gets what he wished, the Master of the Horse; I suppose to leave the Chamberlain's Office vacant for the last incumbent.* The Duke of Rutland to be contented with Lord Granby's being Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, where he will finish† his life and fortune.

In this state I left history. All this arrangement may be already overturned. No man, I suppose, is so unwise as to expect any duration to it. It can only mean, time to deal with the opposition, or to divide them; and, considering what numbers and what great names are to be satisfied, it is a chaos into which one cannot foresee. I have seldom been a lucky prophet, and therefore shall not exercise my talent. The poor man who is gone could have been of the utmost consequence at this moment to accomplish some establishment; he had been offered, and had refused the greatest things—no bad ingredient in reconciling others. In that or any other qualification I know few equal to him. Adieu!

LETTER XLII.

Strawberry Hill, April 30, 1763.

The papers have told you all the formal changes; the real one consists solely in Lord Bute being out of office, for having recovered his fright, he is still as much minister as ever, and consequently does not find his unpopularity decrease. On the contrary I think his situation more dangerous than ever; he has done enough to terrify his friends, and encourage his enemies, and has acquired no new strength; rather has lost strength, by the disappearance of Mr. Fox from the scene. His deputies, too, will not long care to stand all the risk for him, when they perceive, as they must already, that they have neither credit nor confidence. Indeed the new administration is a general joke, and will scarce want a violent death to put an end to it. Lord Bute is very blameable for embarking the King so deep in measures that may have so serious a termination. The longer the court can stand its ground, the more firmly will the opposition be united, and the more inflamed. I have ever thought this would be

* The Duke of Devonshire.
† Lord Granby drank very hard, and was profusely generous.

a turbulent reign, and nothing has happened to make me alter my opinion.

Mr. Fox's exit has been very unpleasant. He would not venture to accept the treasury, which Lord Bute would have bequeathed to him; and could not obtain an earldom, for which he thought he had stipulated; but some of the negotiators asserting that he had engaged to resign the pay-master's place, which he vehemently denies, he has been forced to take up with a barony, and has broken with his associates—I do not say, friends, for with the chief* of *them* he had quarrelled when he embarked in the new system. He meets with little pitty, and yet has found as much ingratitude as he had had power of doing service.

I am glad you are going to have a duke; it will amuse you, and a new court will make Florence lively, the only beauty it wants. You divert me with my friend the Duke of Modena's conscientious match: if the Duchess† had outlived him, she would not have been so scrupulous. But for Hymen's sake, who is that Madame Simonetti? I trust, not that old painted, gaming, debauched Countess‡ from Milan, whom I saw at the fair of Reggio!

I surprise myself with being able to write two pages of pure English; I do nothing but deal in broken French. The two nations are crossing over and figuring-in. We have had a Count d'Usson§ and his wife these six weeks; and last Saturday arrived a Madame de Boufflers,‖ *sçavante galante*, a great friend of the Prince of Conti, and a passionate admirer *de nous autres Anglois*. I am forced to live much with *tout ça*, as they are perpetually at my Lady Hervey's; and as my Lord Hertford goes embassador to Paris, where I shall certainly make him a visit next year—don't you think I shall be computing how far it is to Florence? There is coming, too, a Marquis de Fleury, who is to be consigned to me as a political relation, *vû l'amitié entre le Cardinal son oncle et feu monsieur mon père*. However as my cousin Fleury is not above six-and-twenty, I had much rather be excused from such a commission as showing the tombs and the lions, and the King and Queen, and my Lord Bute and the waxwork, to a boy. All this breaks in upon my plan of withdrawing by little and little from the world, for I hate to tire it with an old lean face, and which promises to be an old lean face for thirty years longer, for I am as well again as ever. The Duc de Nivernois called here the other day in his way from Hampton Court; but, as the most sensible French never have eyes to see any thing, unless they see it every day and see it in fashion, I cannot say he flattered me much, or was much struck with Strawberry. When

* The Dukes of Cumberland and Devonshire.

† She was daughter of the Regent Duke of Orleans.

‡ It was that Madame Simonetti.

§ He was afterwards Envoy to Sweden, where he died in 1781-2. He married a Dutch woman.

‖ Mademoiselle Soujon, Marquise de Boufflers, mistress of the Prince de Conti, whom she hoped to marry.

I carried him into the Cabinet, which I have told you is formed upon the idea of a Catholic chapel, he pulled off his hat, but perceiving his error, he said, "*Ce n'est pas une chapelle pourtant,*" and seemed a little displeased.*

My poor niece does not forget her lord, though by this time I suppose the world has. She has taken a house here, at Twickenham, to be near me. Madame de Boufflers has heard so much of her beauty, that she told me she should be glad to peep through a grate any where to get a glimpse of her,—but at present it would not answer. I never saw so great an alteration in so short a period; but she is too young not to recover her beauty, only dimmed by grief that must be temporary. Adieu! my dear Sir.

Monday, May 2nd, Arlington Street.

The plot thickens: Mr. Wilkes is sent to the Tower for the last North Briton;† a paper whose fame must have reached you. It said Lord Bute had made the King utter a gross falsehood in his last speech. This hero is as bad a fellow as ever hero was, abominable in private life, dull in Parliament, but, they say, very entertaining in a room, and certainly no bad writer, besides having had the honour of contributing a great deal to Lord Bute's fall. Wilkes fought Lord Talbot‡ in the autumn, whom he had abused; and lately in Calais, when the Prince de Croy, the Governor, asked him how far the liberty of the press extended in England, replied, I cannot tell, but I am trying to know. I don't believe this will be the only paragraph I shall send you on this affair.

LETTER XLIII.

Arlington Street, May 10, 1763.

You will be impatient to hear the event of last Friday. Mr. Wilkes was delivered by the Court of Common Pleas, unanimously: not, said they, on a defect of affidavit in the warrant; not on defect of specification of libellous matter in the warrant; (two objections that had been made by his counsel to the legality of the commit-

* The following is Walpole's account of this room:—"It is a square, with a semi-circular recess in the middle of each side, painted stone-colour, with gilt ornaments, and with windows and niches; the latter taken from those on the sides of the north door of the great church at St. Albans. The roof, which is taken from the chapter-house at York, is terminated by a star of yellow glass that throws a golden gloom all over the room, and, with the painted windows, gives it the solemn air of a rich chapel. The windows contain a head of Christ and two Apostles, one in the middle of each, set round with four histories, all old but finely re-coloured by Price, and surrounded with most beautiful mosaics of the purest taste."—Ed.

† This was the celebrated No. 45 of that journal.—Ed.

‡ In this duel with Lord Talbot, Wilkes escaped unhurt; but he was not so fortunate in an encounter which took place afterwards with another person, as will be seen in a subsequent letter of the present series.—Ed.

ment;) but on a breach of privilege, the libel in question not being a breach of the peace, but only tending to it.

The triumph of the Opposition, you may be sure, is great. Though he is still liable to be prosecuted in the King's-bench, a step gained against the Court gives confidence and encouragement. It has given so much to Mr. Wilkes and the warmest of his friends, that I think their indiscretion and indecency will revolt the gravest of their well-wishers. Wilkes keeps no bounds; wrote immediately to the Secretaries of State that his house had been robbed, and that he supposed they had his goods—nay, he went to a justice of peace to demand a warrant for searching their houses, which, you may imagine, he did not obtain. The King ordered Lord Temple, Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, to remove him from the militia of that county. The earl acquainted him with that dismission, in terms of condolence; for which his lordship has since been displaced himself. In short, the scene grows every day more serious—violence on one side, and incapacity on the other.

I quit politics, to tell you the most melancholy catastrophe, that one almost ever heard or read of. The house of Lady Molesworth, in Upper Brook Street, was suddenly burnt to the ground last Friday, between four and five in the morning. Herself, two of her daughters, her brother, and three servants perished, with all the circumstances of horror imaginable! The house, which was small, happened to be crowded, by the arrival of her brother, Captain Usher, from Jamaica, who lay there but that night for the first time, and by a visit from Dr. Molesworth (her brother-in-law) and his wife. The doctor waked, hearing what he thought hail. He rose, opened the window and saw nothing. The noise increased, he opened the door, and found the whole staircase in flames and smoke. Seeing no retreat, he would have persuaded his wife to rush with him into the smoke, and perish at once, as the quickest death. She had not resolution enough. He then flung out a mattress for her to jump on (it was two pair of stairs backwards:) while he was doing this he saw from the garret above one of the young ladies leap into the back court. Mrs. Molesworth then jumped out of the window, and was scarce hurt; he clambered out too, and hung by a hook: a man from the back of another house saw him, and called to him that he would bring a ladder; he did, but it was too sort. However, he begged the doctor, if possible, to hang there still, which, though his strength, for he is a very old man, almost failed him, he did and was saved; but he is since grown so disordered with the terror and calamity, that they doubt if he will live. Lady Molesworth, who lay two pair of stairs forwards, and who, to make room, had taken her eldest daughter, of seventeen, to lie with her, was seen by persons in the street at the window: the daughter jumped into the street, fell on the iron spikes, and thence into the area. Lady Molesworth was at the other window in her shift, and lifted up her hands, either to open the sash, or in agonies for her daughter, but suddenly disappeared. Some think the floor

at that instant fell with her; I rather conclude that she swooned when her daughter leaped, and never recovered.

The young lady has had her leg cut off, and has not been in her senses since. The youngest daughter, about nine or ten, had the quickness to get out at the window on the top of the house, but from spikes and chimneys could get no farther. She went back to her room where her governess was, who jumped first and was dashed to pieces. The child then jumped, and was little hurt, though burnt, and almost stifled by the bed-clothes which Dr. Molesworth flung out, for this was her that he saw. They told her that her governess was safe; she replied, "Don't pretend to make me believe that, for I saw her dead on the pavement, and her brains scattered about."

Another of the sisters jumped too, and escaped with a fractured thigh. A footman, who lay below, and could have saved himself easily, ran up to try to save some of the family, but being involved in flames and much burnt, was forced to try the window, fell on the spikes like Miss Molesworth, but they think will live. Lord Molesworth, the only son, a boy at Westminster, was at home that day, and was to have lain there, but not having done his task, was obliged to go back to school, and was thus fortunately preserved.

The general compassion on this dreadful tragedy is much heightened by the very amiable character of Lord Molesworth. She had been a very great beauty, and was still a most pleasing woman, not above forty. Lord Molesworth, then very aged, married her, and had several children by her; her character and virtue beyond all suspicion untainted, and irreproachable. Her care of her children was most meritorious, and her general behaviour to the greatest degree engaging. Dr. Molesworth had been much her enemy, yet, while her husband lived, she had persuaded him to give the doctor an annuity, and, since his death, has treated him with the utmost friendship.

It is not yet known how this terrible accident happened. Many suspect two blacks belonging to Captain Usher, but I believe merely from not knowing how to account for it, nor where it began.

We have just got three volumes of Lady Mary Wortley's letters; of which she had given copies at Venice. They are entertaining, though perhaps the least of all her works, for these were written during her first travels, and have no personal history. All relating to that is in the hands of Lady Bute, and I suppose will never see the light. These letters, though pretty well guarded, have certain marks of originality—not bating freedoms, both of opinion, and with regard to truth, for which you know she had little partiality. Adieu!

LETTER XLIV.

Strawberry Hill, June 5th, 1762.

I AM much concerned at the melancholy accounts you give me of both Lord and Lady Northampton.* They are young, handsome, and happy, and life was very valuable to them. She has been consumptive some time; but he seemed healthy and strong.

The misery in the family of Molesworth is not yet closed. The eldest young lady, who has had her leg cut off, does not yet know of the loss of her mother and sisters, but believes them much hurt, and not able even to write to her; by degrees they intend to tell her that her mother grows worse and then dies. Till this week she did not know she had lost a limb herself, they keeping the mangled part in a frame. One of her sisters, she of eleven, who is still lame with her bruises, was lately brought to her. They had not prepared the child, thinking she knew nothing of what had happened to Miss Molesworth. The moment the girl came in, she said, "Oh! poor Harriet! they tell me your leg is cut off!" Still this did not undeceive her. She replied, "No, it is not." The method they have since taken to acquaint her with it was very artful: they told her, her leg must be cut off, and then softened the shock by letting her know the truth. She wept much, but soon comforted herself, saying, "Thank God, it is not my arm, for now I can still amuse myself." It would surprise one that at her age so many indications should not lead her to the full extent of her calamity; but they keep her in a manner intoxicated with laudanum. She is in the widow Lady Grosvenor's house, and the humanity, tenderness, and attention of Lord Grosvenor to her is not to be described. The youngest girl overheard the servants in the next room talking of her mother's death, and would not eat any thing for two days.

Lord Bath's extravagant avarice and unfeelingness on his son's death rather increases. Lord Pulteney left a kind of will, saying he had nothing to give, but made it his request to his father to give his post-chaise, and one hundred pounds to his cousin Colman;† the same sum and his pictures to another cousin, and recommended the Lakes, his other cousins, to him. Lord Bath sent Colman and Lockman word they might get their hundred pounds as they could, and for the chaise and pictures they might buy them if they pleased, for they would be sold for his son's debts; and he expressed great anger at the last article, saying, that he did not know what business it was of his son to recommend heirs to him.

I have told you of our French: we have got another curious one, La Condamine, *qui se donne pour philosophe*. He walks about the

* Charles Compton, Earl of Northampton, married Lady Anne Somerset, eldest daughter of Noel Duke of Beaufort.

† George Colman, son of Lady Bath's sister, author of several dramatic works, and afterwards manager of the little theatre in the Hay-market.

streets, with his trumpet and a map, his spectacles on, and hat under his arm.

But, to give you some idea of his philosophy, he was on the scaffold to see Damien executed. His deafness was very inconvenient to his curiosity; he pestered the confessor with questions to know what Damien said: "Monsieur, il jure horriblement." La Condamine replied, "Ma foi, il n'a pas tort;" not approving it, but as sensible of what he suffered. Can one bear such want of feeling?* Oh! but as a philosopher he studied the nature of man in torments;—pray, for what? One who can so far divest himself of humanity as to be, uncalled, a spectator of agony, is not likely to employ much of his time in alleviating it. We have lately had an instance that would set his philosophy to work. A young highwayman was offered his life after condemnation, if he would consent to have his leg cut off, that a new styptic might be tried. "What!" replied he, "and go limping to the devil at last? no, I'll be d———d first"—and was hanged!

Mr. Crawford has given me the second plan of Inigo Jone's church at Leghorn, for which I thank you. I am happy that you are easy about your brother James: I had told you he would write; have not you received that letter?

No public news. Parliamentary and political campaigns end when the military used to begin, and, thank God, we have now not them!

Did I, or did I not, tell you how much I am diverted with his serenity of Modena's match with that old, battered, painted, debauched Simonetta? An antiquated bagnio is an odd place for conscience to steal a wedding in! Two and twenty years ago she was as much repaired as Lady Mary Wortley, or as her own new spouse. Why, if they were not past approaching them, their faces must run together like a palette of colours, and they would be disputing to which such an eyebrow or such a cheek belonged. The first time I saw her, at the fair of Reggio, in 1741, I was to dine with her; and going at three o'clock, found her in a loose linen gown, with no other woman playing at faro with eleven men in white waistcoats and nightcaps. Such a scene was very new to me at that age! I did not expect that twenty years afterwards she would become mistress of the duchy, or be a ladder to help the duke to heaven.

June 7th.

Last night we had a magnificent entertainment at Richmond House, a masquerade and fireworks. A masquerade was a new sight to the young people, who had dressed themselves charmingly, without, having the fear of an earthquake before their eyes, though

* As La Condamine was on the scaffold, one of the executioners said to another, "Est-il des notres?" "Non," replied he, "Monsieur n'est qu'amateur,"—Yet, La Condamine was a very humane and good man.

Prince William and Prince Henry* were not suffered to be there. The Duchesses of Richmond† and Grafton, the first as a Persian Sultana, the latter as Cleopatra,—and such a Cleopatra! were glorious figures, in very different styles. Mrs. Fitzroy‡ in a Turkish dress, Lady George Lenox§ and Lady Bolingbroke‖ as Grecian girls, Lady Mary Coke¶ as Imoinda, and Lady Pembroke** as a pilgrim, were the principal beauties of the night. The whole garden was illuminated, and the apartments. An encampment of barges decked with streamers in the middle of the Thames, kept the people from danger, and formed a stage for the fireworks, which were placed, too, along the rails of the garden. The ground rooms lighted, with suppers spread, the houses covered and filled with people, the bridge, the garden full of masks, Whitehall crowded with spectators to see the dresses pass, and the multitude of heads on the river who came to light by the splendour of the fire-wheels, composed the gayest and richest scene imaginable, not to mention the diamonds and sumptuousness of the habits. The Dukes of York and Cumberland, and the Margrave of Anspach, were there, and about six hundred masks. Adieu!

LETTER XLV.

Arlington Street, June 30, 1763.

Monsieur de la Condamine will certainly have his letter; but, my dear sir, it is equally sure that I shall not deliver it myself. I have given it to my Lord Hertford for him, while I act being in the country. To tell you the truth, La Condamine is absurdity itself. He has had a quarrel with his landlady, whose lodgers being disturbed by La Condamine's servant being obliged to bawl to him, as he is deaf, wanted to get rid of him. He would not budge: she dressed two chairmen for bailiffs to force him out. The next day he published an address to the people of England, in the newspaper, informing them that they are the most savage nation in or out of Europe. This is pretty near truth; and yet I would never have abused the Iroquois to their faces in one of their own gazettes. I honour La Condamine's zeal for inoculation, which is combated by his countrymen. Even here, nonsense attacks it; that is of course, for the practice is sense; but I wish humane men, or men of reflection, would be content to

* Afterwards Dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland.

† Lady Mary Bruce. ‡ Eldest daughter of Sir Peter Warren.

§ Lady Louisa Kerr, eldest daughter of the Marquis of Lothian, and wife of Lord George Lenox, second son of Charles second Duke of Richmond.

‖ Lady Diana Spencer, eldest daughter of Charles Duke of Marlborough, first married to Frederic St. John Viscount Bolingbroke, and afterwards to Topham Beauclerc.

¶ Fourth daughter of John Campbell, Duke of Argyll, and widow of Thomas Lord Coke, only son of Thomas Earl of Leicester.

** Lady Elizabeth Spencer, second daughter of the Duke of Marlborough.

feel and to think, without advertising themselves by a particular denomination. But they will call themselves philosophers, and the instant they have created themselves a character, they think they must distinguish themselves by it, and run into all kind of absurdities. I wish they would consider that the most desirable kind of understanding is the only kind that never aims at any particularity; I mean common sense. This is not Monsieur de la Condamine's kind; and Count Lorenzi must excuse me if I avoid the acquaintance. I think I said something of him in a former letter.

Lord Strathmore is arrived, and has brought the parcel. He has been twice at Palazzo Pitti.* I prefer the master of the latter. The Lord is too *doucereux* and Céladonian.†

You say I am patron of the French; I fear they do not think so. Very, very few of them have struck me. Then the trouble of conversing in a language not one's own, and the difficulty of expressing one's ideas as one would, disheartens me. Madame de Boufflers has pleased me most, and conceives us the best; though I doubt whether she will return so partial to us as she came. She told me one day, "*Dans ce pays ci c'est un effort perpétual pour se divertir;*" and she did not seem to think we succeed. However, next Spring I must go to Paris, which at present, like the description of the grave, is the way of all flesh. Foley, the banker at Paris, told Lord Strathmore,‡ that thirty thousand pounds have been remitted hence every month since the peace, for the English that flock thither.

Your account of Lord Northampton§ is moving. He will, I fear, be little better for Tronchin, who, I am assured from very good judges at Paris, is little better than a charlatan.

I have nothing to tell you, and I am glad of it; we have a long repose from politics; and it is comfortable when folks can be brought to think or talk of something else, which they seldom will in winter. My gallery occupies me entirely, but grows rather too magnificent for my humility; however, having at no time created myself a philosopher, I am at liberty to please myself, without minding a contradiction or two. Adieu!

* The house of Mr. Thomas Pitt, at Twickenham.

† Too much of a swain, a Céladon.

‡ John, ninth Earl. The noblemen of this title are also thanes of Glamis,—a distinction which Shakspeare, referring to a former race, has immortalized in his "Macbeth."—Ed.

§ Charles, seventh Earl, grandson of George, fourth Earl, through his youngest son, the Hon. George Compton. He married in 1759, Anne, daughter of Charles, Duke of Beaufort, by whom he left an only daughter, Elizabeth, who married, in 1782, Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish, uncle of the present Duke of Devonshire. The Earl died a few months after the above was written.—Ed.

LETTER XLVI.

Arlington Street, Aug. 11, 1763.

I AM never so fruitful in summer, you know, as in winter. This year I am particularly barren. Your letter of July 23rd has given me a little fillip, or I don't know when I should have written, for I have not a single circumstance to tell you, but that you will soon see a greater prince than him of Lichtenstein. The Duke of York is going to take a Mediterranean tour with Augustus Hervey,* and, when at Leghorn, will certainly see Florence. You will find him civil, condescending, and good-natured to a great degree; and *loro eccellenze*, the *Dame Fiorentine* will like him still better, for he is very *galant* and very generous.

I am very sorry for Lord Northampton, and yet I could not help smiling at his physician's expression, that he seemed to go *al patibolo in gala*. La Condamine, I believe, is departed; I have heard nothing of him this month or six weeks. The French do not arrive in such shoals as we do at Paris; there are no fewer than five English duchesses there, Ancester, Richmond, Bridgewater, Hamilton, and Douglas: the last two, indeed, upon an extraordinary law-suit, which is vastly too long for a letter, and curious enough for the *Causes Célèbres*. It is a contest about the Douglas estate, to which the Hamiltons think a pretender has been set up, and whom they say they shall, or have detected. This suit is not more extraordinary than the taste of the French, who prefer the Duchess of Ancester to either the Hamilton or the Richmond. The last, Lady Ailesbury's daughter, is in all the bloom of youth and beauty, but awkard and unfashioned; the second is sadly changed by ill health from that lovely figure which disputed with her sister Coventry; and yet one is surprised that what was so charming, or what could be so charming, should not be preferred to the first, the Duchess of Ancaster,† who is not young, was at best a pretty figure, is now repaired by very evident art, and is a heap of *minauderies* and affectations which have not even the stamp of a woman of quality; but taste seems as much extinguished in France as spirit or parts. Adieu!

LETTER XLVII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 1, 1763.

MY letters are like the works of Vertot; I write nothing but *les Révolutions d'Angleterre*. Indeed, the present history is like some

* Captain of a man of-war, and afterwards Earl of Bristol.
† Daughter of Mr. Panton of Newmarket.

former I have sent you,—a revolution that has not taken place, and, resembling Lord Granville's,* begun and ended in three days. I could have despatched it last Tuesday with regard to the termination of it; but, though I heard it was begun, even on the Saturday while it was beginning, my curiosity did not carry me to town till Tuesday, when I found it all addled. Still, I knew too little to detail it to you; and, even now, I can tell you little more than the outlines and general report—but have patience; this is one of the events which in this country will produce paper-war enough, and between attacks and defences one comes pretty near to the truth of the whole.

Last Sunday was se'nnight Lord Egremont† died suddenly, though every body knew he would die suddenly; he used no exercise, and could not be kept from eating, without which prodigious bleedings did not suffice. A day or two before he died, he said, "Well, I have but three turtle-dinners to come, and if I survive them I shall be immortal." He was writing, as my lady breakfasted, complained of a violent pain in his head, asked twice if he did not look very particularly, grew speechless, and expired that evening. He has left eighteen thousand pounds a-year, and, they say, a hundred and seventy thousand pounds in money. I hope you have as much philosophy as I have, or you will lose patience at these circumstances, when you are eager to hear the revolution. That week, you may be sure, was passed by the public in asking who was to be Secretary of State? It seemed to lie between your old friend, Lord Sandwich, and Lord Egmont. Lord Shelburne, a young aspirer, who intends the world shall hear more of him, *et qui postule le ministère*, was in the mean time one of the candidates to succeed Lord Egremont. Somebody said, "It ought to be given to him as you marry boys under age, and then send them to travel till they are ripe." While this vacancy was the public's only object, behold Mr. Pitt, in his chair, with two servants before it, goes openly, at nine o'clock on Saturday morning, through the Park to Buckingham House. You rub your eyes; so did the mob, and thought they did not see clear. Mr. Pitt, of all men alive, except Lord Temple and Mr. Wilkes, the most proscribed there, Mr. Pitt to Buckingham House! *Oui, véritablement!* What! to ask to be Secretary of State? By no means: sent for; desired to accept the administration. Well, but do you know who stared more than the mob or you; the ministers did; for it seems this was the act and deed of Lord Bute, who, though he had given the present administration letters of attorney to act for him, has thought better of it, and retained the sole power himself; the consequence of which was, as it was before, that he grew horridly frightened, and advised this step, which has done him more hurt than all he had done before.

Mr. Pitt stayed with the King three hours; is said not to have de-

* In 1746.
† Sir Charles Wyndham, first Earl of Egremont.

manded more than might well be expected that he would demand; and had all granted. The next day, Sunday, the Opposition were much pleased, looking on their desires as obtained; the ministers, as much displeased, thinking themselves betrayed by Lord Bute. On Monday, Mr. Pitt, who the day before had seen the Duke of Newcastle and the Lord Mayor Beckford,—the one or the other of whom is supposed to have advised what follows,—went again to the King, with a large increase of demands. What those were are variously stated, nor do I pretend to tell you how far the particulars are exact. The general purport is, though I dare say not to the extent given out, that he insisted on a general dismission of all who had voted for the peace; and that he notified his intention of attacking the peace itself: that he particularly proscribed Lord Holland, Lord Halifax, Lord Sandwich,* Lord Barrington, and Lord Shelburne; named himself and Charles Townshend for Secretaries of State, Lord Temple for the Treasury, Pratt for Chancellor; proposed some place, not of business, for the Duke of Newcastle, forgot Mr. Legge, and desired the Duke of Cumberland for the head of the army. They tell you, that the King asked him, "Mr. Pitt, if it is right for you to stand by your friends, why is it not as right for me to stand by mine?" and that the treaty broke off, on his Majesty's refusing to give up his friends. Broken off the negotiation certainly is. Why broken, I shall, as I told you before, wait a little before I settle my belief. The ministers were sent for again; Mr. Pitt and Lord Temple, according to the modern well-bred usage, were at the levée yesterday, had each their drawing-room question; and there ended this interlude.

It is said Lord Sandwich kisses hands to-morrow for Secretary of State. If a President of the Council is named too, I shall think they mean to stand it; if not, I shall conclude a door is still left open for treating.

There was a little episode, previous to this more dignified drama, which was on the point of employing the attention of the public, if it had not been overlaid by the revolution in question. The famous Mr. Wilkes was challenged at Paris, by one Forbes, an outlawed Scot in the French service, who could not digest *the North Britons*. Wilkes would have joked it off, but it would not do. He then insisted on seconds; Forbes said, duels were too dangerous in France for such extensive proceedings. Wilkes adhered to his demand. Forbes pulled him by the nose, or, as Lord Mark Kerr,† in his well-bred formality, said to a gentleman, "Sir you are to suppose I have thrown this glass of wine in your face." Wilkes cried out murder! The lieutenant de police was sent for, and obliged Forbes to promise that he would proceed no farther. Notwithstanding the present discussion, you may imagine the Scotch will not let this anecdote be still-born. It is cruel on Lord Talbot, whom Wilkes ventured to fight.

* John, fourth Earl of Sandwich. He assisted at the celebrated congress at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748. Subsequently to this he filled the offices of Secretary of State, and First Lord of the Admiralty. His lordship died in 1792.—Ed.

† Brother of the Marquis of Lothian, a very brave but remarkably formal man.

Other comical passages have happened to us at Paris. Their King, you know, is wondrous shy to strangers, awkward at a question, or too familiar. For instance, when the Duke of Richmond was presented to him, he said, "Monsieur le Duc de Cumberland boude le Roi, n'est-ce pas?" The Duke was confounded. The King persisted, "Il le fait, n'est-il pas vrai?" The duke answered very properly. "Ses ministres quelquefois, Sire, jamais sa Majesté." This did not stop him: "Et vous, milord, quand aurez-vous le cordon bleu?" George Selwyn, who stood behind the duke, said softly, "Answer that if you can my lord." To Lord Holland, the King said, "Vous avez fait bien du bruit dans votre pays, n'est-ce pas? His answer was pretty too: "Sire, je fais tout mon possible pour le faire cesser." Lord Holland was better diverted with the Duchesse d'Aiguillon; she got him and Lady Holland tickets for one of the best boxes to see the fireworks on the peace, and carried them in her coach. When they arrived, he had forgot the tickets; she flew into a rage, and, *sans marchander*, abused him so grossly that Lady Holland coloured, and would not speak to her. Not content with this, when her footman opened the door of the coach, the duchess, before all the mob, said aloud, "C'est une des meilleures têtes de l'Angleterre, et voici la bêtise qu'il a fait!" and repeated it. He laughed, and the next day she recollected herself, and made an excuse.

Mrs. Poyntz* is *au comble de la gloire* at Versailles; she has cured Madame Victoire of the stone, by Mrs. Stephens's medicine. When Mrs. Poyntz took leave of them for Spa, they shut the door, and the whole royal family kissed her; for the King is so fond of his children that, they say, it was visible every day in his countenance whether his daughter was better or worse.

We sent you Sir William Stanhope,† and my lady, a fond couple; you have returned them to us very different. When they came to Blackheath, he got out of the chaise to go to his brother Lord Chesterfield's, made her a low bow, and said, "Madame, I hope I shall never see your face again." She replied, "Sir, I will take all the care I can that you never shall." He lays no gallantry to her charge.

We are sending you another couple, the famous Garrick, and his once famous wife.‡ He will make you laugh as a mimic, and as he knows we are great friends, will affect great partiality to me; but be a little upon your guard, remember he is an *actor*.

My poor niece§ has declared herself not breeding: you will be charmed with the delicacy of her manner in breaking it to General Waldegrave. She gave him her lord's seal with the coronet. You

* Anna Maria Mordaunt, wife of Stephen Poyntz, governor of William Duke of Cumberland. She had been a great beauty: the poem of "The Fair Circassian" was written on her. She was Maid of Honour to Queen Caroline.

† A man of wit, and brother of the famous Lord Chesterfield. His third wife was sister of Sir Francis Delaval.

‡ La Violetta, a German dancer.

§ Lady Waldegrave.

will be more charmed with her. On Sunday the bishop of Exeter* and I were talking of this new convulsion in politics—she burst out in a flood of tears, reflecting on the great rank which her lord, if living, would naturally attain on this occasion.

I think I have nothing more to tell you, but a bon-mot of my Lady Townshend.† She has taken a strange little villa at Paddington, near Tyburn. People were wondering at her choosing such a situation, and asked her, in joke, what sort of neighbourhood she had: "Oh," said she, "one that can never tire me, for they are hanged every week." Good night. This would be a furious long letter, if it was not short by containing a whole revolution.

LETTER XLVIII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 13, 1763,

The administration is resettled: the Opposition does not come in; and the old ministers have resumed their functions. The Duke of Bedford, who had formerly advised to invite Mr. Pitt to court, finding himself omitted in Mr. Pitt's list, is cordially united, nay, incorporated with the administration; he has kissed hands for President of the Council. Lord Sandwich is the new Secretary of State, Lord Egmont the new head of the Admiralty, and Lord Hilsborough the new First Lord of Trade, for Lord Shelburne whom I mentioned to you in my last, has resigned in the midst of these bustles. Many reasons are given, but the only one that people choose to take is, that, thinking Mr. Pitt must be minister, and finding himself tolerably obnoxious to him, he is seeking to make his peace at any rate.

This concussion has produced one remarkable event, the total removal of Lord Bute, which Mr. Grenville and Lord Halifax made the absolute *sine quâ non* of their re-acceptance. The favourite earl has given it under his hand that he will go abroad. Thus ends his foolish drama—not its consequences, for the flames he has lighted up will not be extinguished soon.

I could tell you a great deal of what is reported of the dialogue in the closet, but not a circumstance which is not denied on one side or the other, for though there were but two interlocutors, there is a total disagreement in the relation. Parties will not meet in better humour next session for this abortive negotiation: the paper-war is rekindled with violence, but produces no wit; nay, scarce produces the bulk of a pamphlet, for the fashionable warfare at present is carried on by anonymous‡ letters in the daily newspapers, which die as sud-

* Dr. Keppel, her brother-in-law. † Ethelreda Harrison.

‡ It is certain that from this time, when anonymous writers could get their letters printed in the daily newspapers, pamphlets grew exceedingly rare.

denly as other lies of the day. This skirmishing is sharp and lively, but not very entertaining.

I have not a syllable of other news to send you. You must take this rather as a codicil to my last letter, than as pretending to be a letter itself. The Parliament, I suppose, will not meet till after Christmas, and till then little material is likely to happen; unless some notable death should intervene, which, considering the tottering condition of some principal performers, is not unlikely. An old statesman who has November to pass through in his way to preferment, may chance never to arrive at it. Adieu!

LETTER XLIX.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 17, 1763.

I DON'T know how long it is since I wrote to you,—I fear a great while; but I think my fidelity to you as a correspondent is so proved, that you may be sure not an incident worthy of a paragraph has happened when you do not hear from me. The very newspapers have subsisted only on the price of stocks, horseraces, the arrival of the good ship Charming Nancy, and such anecdotes, with the assistance of the heroic controversy between Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Forbes, of which one is heartily sick. But the campaign draws near, and will be hot enough. Methinks I wish we had some fresh generals; I am rather tired of the old ones, all of whom I have seen so often both on the offensive and defensive, that I am incredibly incurious about their manœuvres.

The press for soldiers is so warm that Augustus Hervey could not be spared to attend the Duke of York, who has sailed some time. I shall be very impatient to hear of the Duke's arrival at Florence; tell me the whole history. You will be very anxious, but you will acquit yourself perfectly well. Lord Hertford set out on his embassy last Thursday, and by this time I suppose Monsieur de Guerchy is in London. Most of our Parisian English are come back. The newspapers have given the rage of going to Paris a good name; they call it the *French disease*. I shall be a little ashamed of having it so late; but I shall next spring. Having Lord Hertford there will be so agreeable a way of seeing Paris, that one cannot resist, especially as I took such pains to see so little of it when I was there before. I don't expect to like it much better now, though having a particular friend minister goes a great way in reconciling one to a country not one's own; I don't believe I should have been quite so fond of Florence if I had lived with nothing but Florentines. This time I am determined to ascertain what I have always doubted of, whether there is any such thing as a lively Frenchman; the few I knew, and all those I have seen here, have had no more vivacity than a German. You see I do not go prejudiced.

Have you got Mr. Garrick yet?* If you have, you may keep him; there is come forth within these ten days a young actor, who has turned the heads of the whole town. The first night of his appearance the audience, not content with clapping, stood up and shouted. His name is Powell; he was clerk to Sir Robert Ladbroke, and so clever in business that his master would have taken him in as a partner, but he had an impulse for the stage, was a *Heaven-born hero*, as Mr. Pitt called my Lord Clive. His figure is fine and voice most sonorous, as they say, for I wait for the rebound of his fame, and till I can get in, for at present all the boxes are taken for a month. As the reputation of this prodigy could not have reached France, where they have the *English disease*, they were content with showering honours on Mr. Garrick; appointed a box for him, revived their best plays, and recalled their veteran actors. Their Helvetius, whose book has drawn such persecution on him, and the persecution such fame, is coming to settle here, and brings two Miss Helvetiuses, with fifty thousand pounds a-piece, to bestow on two immaculate members of our most august and incorruptible senate, if he can find two in this virtuous age who will condescend to accept his money. Well, we may be dupes to French follies, but they are ten times greater fools to be the dupes of our virtue. Good night.

Arlington Street, Oct. 18.

I BROUGHT this to town to-day for the Secretary's office, and found yours of October 1st. Marshal Botta's advice of ceding your palace to the Duke of York may be very proper, but his Royal Highness, who is all good-breeding and good-humour, will certainly not suffer it. Yet, I am not averse to your making the offer, if it is still to make. Do you know, my national pride is wonderfully gratified by the Pope's humility and respect for whom we please to have Duke of York.† A hundred and fifty years ago an English Protestant dared not own himself for such at Rome; now they invite the very son of a family that has turned out their Stuarts, under the nose of those very Stuarts, nay, when the Stuart Duke of York is even a cardinal. I trust it is not only the Papal chair that has sunk, but the crown of England that has risen. Think of the mighty Elizabeth excommunicated by Sixtus V. and the brother of George III. invited to Rome by Clement XIII. If the honours I have told you Mr. Garrick has received in France do not obtain him a chair in a Florentine *conversazione*, I think you must threaten them with the thunder of the Vatican, which you see we have at command; but to be serious, I would not have you get into a squabble about him; he is not worth that.

We hear the King of Poland is dead; is that to be the source of a

* In this year Garrick resolved to relax from his cares and fatigues in a tour to the Continent. Accompanied by his wife, from whom he was inseparable, he visited several parts of Italy and France, and met with flattering notice from many persons of distinction. He returned after an absence of a year and a half.—ED.

† Edward Augustus, tenth Duke of York, second son of Frederick Prince of Wales, and brother to George III. . He died, unmarried, at Monaco in Italy.—ED.

new war? You will see by the gazette, that without such an event we had a nest egg for another war. There have been half-a-dozen battles in miniature with the Indians in America. It looked so odd to see a list of killed and wounded just treading on the heels of the peace.

LETTER L.

Arlington Street, Nov. 17th, 1763.

The campaign is opened, hostilities begun, and blood shed. Now you think, my dear sir, that all this is metaphor, and mere eloquence. You are mistaken: our diets, like that approaching in Poland, use other weapons than the tongue; ay, in good truth, and they who use the tongue too, and who perhaps you are under the common error of thinking would not fight, have signalized their prowess. But stay, I will tell you my story more methodically; perhaps you shall not know for these two pages what member of the British Senate, of that august divan whose wisdom influences the councils of all Europe, as its incorrupt virtue recalls to mind the purest ages of Rome, was shot in a duel yesterday in Hyde-park. The parliament met on Tuesday. We—for you know I have the honour of being a senator, sat till two in the morning; and had it not been that there is always more oratary, more good sense, more knowledge, and more sound reasoning in the House of Commons, than in the rest of the universe put together, the House of Lords only excepted, I should have thought it as tedious, dull, and unentertaining a debate as ever I heard in my days. The business was a complaint made by one King George of a certain paper called the North Briton, No. 45, which the said King asserted was written by a much more famous man called Mr. Wilkes. —Well! and so you imagine that Mr. Wilkes and King George went from the House of Commons and fought out their quarrel in Hyde-park? And which do you guess was killed? Again you are mistaken. Mr. Wilkes, with all the impartiality in the world, and with the phlegm of an Areopagite, sat and heard the whole matter discussed, and now and then put in a word, as if the affair did not concern *him*. The House of Commons, who would be wisdom itself, if they could but all agree on which side of a question wisdom lies, and who are sometimes forced to divide in order to find this out, did divide twice on this affair. The first time, one hundred and eleven, of which I had the misfortune to be one, had more curiosity to hear Mr. Wilkes's story than King George's; but three hundred being of the contrary opinion, it was plain they were in the right, especially as they had no *private* motives to guide them. Again, the individual one hundred-and-eleven could not see that the North Briton tended to foment treasonable insurrections, though we had it argumentatively demonstrated to us for seven hours together: but the moment we heard two hundred and seventy-five gentlemen counted, it grew as plain to us as a pike-staff, for a syllogism carries less conviction than a superior number, though that number does not use the least force

upon earth, but only walk peaceably out of the house and into it again. The next day we were to be in the same *numerical* way convinced that we ought to be but one hundred and ten, for that we ought to expel Mr. Wilkes out of the house; and the majority were to prove to us (for we are slow of comprehension, and imbibe instruction very deliberately) that in order to have all London acquainted with the person and features of Mr. Wilkes, it would be necessary to set him on a high place called the pillory, where every body might see him at leisure. Some were even almost ready to think that, being a very ugly man, he would look better without his ears; and poor Sir William Stanhope, who endeavoured all day by the help of a trumpet to listen to these wise debates and found it to no purpose, said, "If they want a pair of ears they may take mine, for I am sure they are of no use to me." The regularity, however, of these systematic proceedings has been a little interrupted. One Mr. Martin,* who has much the same quarrel with Mr. Wilkes as King George, and who chose to suspend his resentment like his Majesty, till with proper dignity he could notify his wrath to Parliament, did express his indignation with rather less temper than the King had done, calling Mr. Wilkes to his face *cowardly scoundrel*, which you, who represent monarchs, know, is not royal language. Mr. Wilkes, who, it seems, whatever may have been thought, had rather die compendiously than piece-meal, inquired of Mr. Martin by letter next morning, if he, Mr. Wilkes, was meant by him, Mr. Martin under the periphrasis *cowardly scoundrel*. Mr. Martin replied in the affirmative, and accompanied his answer with a challenge. They immediately went into Hyde-park; and, at the second fire, Mr. Wilkes received a bullet in his body. Don't be frightened, the wound was not mortal—at least it was not yesterday. Being corporally delirious to-day, as he has been mentally some time, I cannot tell what to say to it. However, the breed will not be lost, if he should die. You have still countrymen enough left: we need not despair of amusement.

Now, would not you think that this man had made noise enough, and that he had no occasion to burn a temple to perpetuate his name? Alas, alas! there is nothing like having two strings to one's bow. The very day in which the scene I have mentioned passed in the House of Commons, Lord Sandwich produced to the Lords a poem, called an *Essay on Woman*, written by the same Mr. Wilkes, though others say, only enlarged by him from a sketch drawn by a late son† of a late archbishop. It is a parody on Pope's Essay on Man; and, like that, pretending to notes by Dr. Warburton, the present holy and orthodox Bishop of Gloucester. The piece, indeed, was only printed, and only fourteen copies, but never published. Mr. Wilkes complains that he never read it but to two persons, who both approved it

* Samuel Martin, a West-Indian, Secretary to the Treasury, when Lord Bute was First Lord, and Treasurer to the Princess dowager of Wales.

† Thomas Potter, son of Dr. Potter, Archbishop of Canterbury.

highly, Lord Sandwich and Lord Despencer.* The style, to be sure, is at least not unlike that of the last. The wicked even affirm, that very lately, at a club with Mr. Wilkes, held at the top of the playhouse in Drury Lane, Lord Sandwich talked so profanely that he drove two harlequins out of company. You will allow, however, that the production of this poem so critically was masterly: the secret too was well kept; nor, till a vote was passed against it, did even Lord Temple suspect who was the author. If Mr. Martin has not killed him, nor should we, you see here are faggots enough in store for him still. The Bishop of Gloucester, who shudders at abuse and infidelity, has been measuring out ground in Smithfield for his execution; and in his speech begged the devil's pardon for comparing him to Wilkes.

Well, now! after all, do you with your plain Florentine understanding comprehend one word of what I have been saying? Do you think me or your countrymen quite distracted? Go, turn to your Livy, to your history of Athens, to your life of Sacheverel. Find upon record what mankind has been, and then you will believe what it is. We are poor pigmy, short-lived animals, but we are comical, —I don't think the curtain fallen and the drama closed. Three hundred is an omnipotent number, and may do whatever it will; and yet I think there are some single men, whom three hundred cannot convince. Well, but then they may cut their ears off; I don't see what could hinder it. Adieu!

LETTER LI.

Arlington Street, Dec. 12th, 1763.

My last journal was dated the 18th of last month. Since that period we have been solely employed upon Mr. Wilkes, or events flowing from him; for he is an inexhaustible source. I shall move regularly, and tell you his history in order.

In the first place, he is not dead of his wound, though not yet out of danger, for they think another piece of his coat is to come away, as two have already.

On the 23rd we, the Commons, had a debate that lasted late, whether we should proceed to the question on privilege, as Wilkes could not attend. There was a great defection among the royal troops, and the minority amounted to 166: but the next day, on the question itself, it sunk to 133, when we resigned our privilege into the hands of any messengers that should be sent for it. Mr. Pitt was brought thither in flannels, and spoke for two hours, but was forced to retire four hours before we came to the question.

These debates were followed by a curious account of the famous blasphemous and indecent poem, the Essay on Woman, published by

* Sir Francis Dashwood, Lord Despencer.

one Kidgell, a Methodist parson, who had been employed to hunt it out. The man has most deservedly drawn on himself a torrent of indignation and odium, which I suppose he will forget in a deanery.*

The next proceeding was in the Lords, who sat till ten at night on the question of agreeing to our resolutions. The Duke of Cumberland, who voted at the head of the minority, was as unsuccessful as he has been in other engagements, and was beaten by 114 to 35.

So much for within doors. But without, where the minority is the majority, the event was very different. "The North Briton" was ordered to be burned by the hangman at Cheapside on the third of this month. A prodigious riot ensued; the sheriffs were mobbed, the constables beaten, and the paper with much difficulty set on fire by a link, and then rescued. The ministry, some in a panic and some in a rage, fetched the sheriffs before both houses; but, after examinations and conferences for four days, the whole result was, that all the world had appeared to be on the same side, that is, not well disposed to the administration. This dissatisfaction has been increased by a violent attack made by the Duke of Bedford on the lord mayor, aldermen, and common council, for not discountenancing and suppressing the riot; and though he was abandoned by the rest of the ministry, who paid court to the city at his grace's expense, they were so exasperated, that a motion being made to thank the sheriffs for their behaviour, and to prosecute one of the rioters, who is in prison, it was rejected on a division by the casting vote of the lord mayor.

The ministry have received a still greater mortification: the Under Secretary, Mr. Wood, has been cast in the Common-Pleas in damages of a thousand pounds to Mr. Wilkes; the printers too have recovered four hundred; and, what is still more material, the Solicitor-General could not make out his proof of Wilkes being author of the "North Briton."

The last scene has been an attempt to assassinate Wilkes. A sea-lieutenant, called Alexander Dun, got into his house on Thursday night last for that purpose; but he is not only mad, but so mad that he had declared his intention in a coffee-house some nights before; and said that twelve more Scotchmen, for he is one, were engaged in the same design.

I have told you all this briefly, but you may imagine what noise so many events have made in the hands of some hundred thousand commentators.

The famous Lord Shelburne, and the no less famous Colonel Barré —I don't know whether their fame has reached you—are turned out for joining the Opposition.

The approaching holidays will suspend farther hostilities for some time, or prepare more. We have scarce any other kind of news than politics. The interlude of Princess Augusta's wedding will be of very short duration.

You have seen some mention in the papers of Monsieur D'Eon,

* Kidgell was forced to leave England for debt, and died abroad.

who, from secretary to Monsieur de Nivernois, became Plenipotentiary; an honour that turned his brain. His madness first broke out upon one Vergy, an adventurer, whose soul he threatened to put into a certain vessel and make him drink it. His rage was carried so far one night at Lord Halifax's, that he was put under arrest. Being told that his behaviour was a breach of the peace, he thought it meant the *peace* he had signed, and grew ten times more mad. This idea he has thrust into a wild book that he has published, the title-page of which would divert you; he states all his own names, titles, and offices: Noble Claude, Genevieve, Louis, Auguste, Cæsar, Alexandre, Hercule, and I don't know what, Docteur en Droit: the *chute* from Cæsar to Master Doctor is admirable. The conclusion of the story is, that the poor creature has all the papers of the negotiation in his hands, and threescore thousand livres belonging to the Comte de Guerchy, and will deliver neither one nor the other. He is recalled from home, and forbidden the court here, but enjoys the papers, and lives on the money, and they don't know how to recover either. Monsieur de Guerchy has behaved with the utmost tenderness and humanity to him. This minister is an agreeable man, and pleases much.

I have received your long letter of November 12th, with your expectations of the Duke of York, the Woronzows, and the Garricks, most of whom are I suppose arrived by this time. The Chelsea china, as you guessed, was a present from the Duchess of Grafton: I told her how pleased you were with it, and that you flattered yourself it was her present. She thought you knew it, for she says she had written to you two letters.

Adieu! You must live upon this letter for some time. Our *villeggiatura* begins when yours ends. The town will be quite empty in a week, till the 18th or 20th of January, unless folks come to stare at the Prince of Brunswick; but I don't know when he is to be here. Nay, you will not want English news, while you have English Princes, Russian Chancellors, and English players.

LETTER LII.

Strawberry-Hill, January 8th, 1764.

My dear sir, it does not rain histories, as it did the first week of the session. I am very faithful to you, and never omit a material event. The Parliament has been adjourned these three weeks, and partly been to keep its Christmas in the country. To-morrow s'nnight we meet again, and some of our passions will revive, though a good quantity probably will subside, as Mr. Wilkes, the hero of the times, has preferred France to martyrdom. This excuses me from what, by the way, I would have excused myself somehow or other, the entering with you into a discussion of the controversy on his subject. I have no objection to the opinion you have formed, while you are

at such a distance; I am no maker of converts, and you and I shall never love one another the less for thinking differently. I will have the famous No. 45 written out for you, for it is not to be had now but in the collection printed together. The Essay on Woman I do not wonder you concluded had been re-printed, but it has not; nor have I ever seen it, though it lies in the House of Lords. The public attention was instantly diverted from the piece itself to indignation at the manner in which it was obtained. Then there was a dirty parson, one Kidgell, who, not content with being the procurer, published such an indecent account of it, as at once satisfied the curiosity of the town, and provoked them to abhorrence of the wretched tool himself. He has been pelted in every newspaper, while the work itself was forgotten. Whether the ministers will be so weak as to revive this clamour now Wilkes is gone, I don't know,—judgment is not their bright side!

Don't think I disapprove your magnificence for your Russian guests: and yet, my dear sir, the generosity of your temper is fond of catching at a command to be expensive. I can excuse it too, as I conclude the Muscovite Chancellor hates his mistress, the murderess: one can't help being civil to any body who wishes her dead. We are on the eve of a royal wedding, but not a very sumptuous one. The Hereditary Prince is expected every hour, and if arrived, is, they say, to be married on the 12th. You see I talk of it with little certainty. I shall satisfy my curiosity by seeing him at the Opera; a glimpse of a hero will content me. He is to take away his bride almost as soon as possible after the nuptials.

There is a wedding in embryo that touches you much nearer than the Princess Augusta's. Your nephew Horace is to marry a sister of the Earl of Gainsborough. I believe it is quite fixed, though not to be perfected till he is of age. She has little beauty, I hear, and less fortune, but the boy likes her, and the alliance is very creditable. He is a most amiable, gentle, good-natured lad; I grieve that this business will prevent you seeing him, but I recollect that you were not fond of having him at Florence.

Thursday night, late, but not the wedding-night.

We have heard, but since six this evening, that the Hereditary Prince has landed; the wedding, I fancy, will scarcely be sooner than Monday. Next week will be the reign of gold and silver stuffs, for besides the marriage, there is the Queen's birth-day; but Mr. Wilkes will spoil half the solemnity, if he does not return to be sacrificed. Bishop Warburton has whetted ready a classic knife, which he would swear came from Diana's own alter in the Chersonesus, whose religion he believes as much as that he professes, except that the archbishopric of Tauris is at present *in partibus infidelium;* and the Turks have sequestered the revenues. Adieu.

LETTER LIII.

Arlington Street, January 18, 1764.

Shall I tell you of all our crowds, and balls, and embroideries? Don't I grow too old to describe drawing-rooms? Surely I do, when I find myself too old to go into them. I foreswore puppet-shows at the last coronation, and have kept my word to myself. However, being bound by a prior vow, to keep up the acquaintance between you and your own country, I will show you, what by the way I have not seen myself, the Prince of Brunswick.* He arrived at Somerset House last Friday evening; at Chelmsford a quaker walked into the room, *did* pull off his hat, and said, "Friend, my religion forbids me to fight, but I honour those that fight well." The Prince, though he does not speak English, understands it enough to be pleased with the compliment. He received another, very flattering. As he went next morning to St. James's, he spied in the crowd one of Elliot's light-horse and kissed his hand to the man. "What!" said the populace, "does he know you?" "Yes," replied the man; "he once led me into a scrape, which nothing but himself could have brought me out of again." You may guess how much this added to the Prince's popularity, which was at high-water-mark before.

When he had visited the King and Queen, he went to the Princess Dowager at Leicester House, and saw his mistress. He is very *galant*, and professes great satisfaction in his fortune, for he had not even seen her picture. He carries his good-breeding so far as to declare he would have returned unmarried, if she had not pleased him. He has had levees and dinners at Somerset House; to the latter, company was named for him. On Monday evening they were married by the archbishop in the great drawing-room, with little ceremony; supped, and lay at Leicester House. Yesterday morning was a dawing-room at St. James's, and a ball at night; both repeated to-day, for the Queen's birthday. On Thursday they go to the play; on Friday the Queen gives them a ball and dinner at her house; on Saturday they dine with the Princess at Kew, and return for the Opera; and on Wednesday—why, they make their bow and curtsy, and sail.

The Prince has pleased every body; his manner is thought sensible and engaging; his person slim, genteel, and handsome enough; that is, not at all handsome, but martial, and agreeably weather-worn.

* Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick, born in 1735. He was the eldest son of the reigning Duke, Charles of Brunswick, and of a sister of Frederick the Great. He distinguished himself at the battle of Hastenbeck (1757) and contributed to the victory of Crefeld (1758.) On January 16th, 1764, he married the Princess Augusta, eldest sister to George III., with a portion of 80,000*l.* voted to her by Parliament. In 1780, he succeeded to the Duchy of Brunswick, and, on the breaking out of the French Revolution, he received the chief command of the Austrian and Prussian army. He died at Ottensen, near Altona, November 10, 1806, of a wound he had received at the battle of Jena.—Ed.

I should be able to swear to all this on Saturday, when I intend to see him; but, alas! the post departs on Friday, and, however material my testimony may be, he must want it.

By the subsequent post I shall have forgotten him. A new hero, or rather a revived hero, was to have taken his place. To-morrow is the day appointed by the House of Commons for the appearance of Mr. Wilkes. He had ordered a dinner for to-day, and company to be invited; nay, he sent word he should certainly be here—and who do you think was the messenger? only Mr. Martin, who was at Paris for mudering him. Wilkes made Martin a visit there, sat with him an hour, joked as usual, told him he had really come thither only to see his daughter; that, concluding he should be shut up in prison for six or twelve months, he could not bear the thoughts of not seeing her before that; that this passion was as strong as the *maladie du pays* of the Swiss—very well: we had no doubt but we should see him. Cards were sent to the mob to invite them to meet him—alas! last night came a letter of excuse to the Speaker, pleading the impediment of his wound, and accompanied by certificates of French surgeons. Paris seems very fatal to Wilkes's courage! If he had sent an insulting message to the House of Commons, or even professed having fled from persecution, it might pass,—all that, or either, would have coupled very well with his patriotism. I cannot possibly honour paltry medium. However, I am very glad he is not come. But he must fight the Parliament of Paris to retrieve his character, or at least be sent to the Bastille, to excuse his not being in Newgate. For our parts, we have no occasion to practice at a target;* we may do what we will with him, now we can do nothing; expel him, send his writings to jail and execute his excuses—nay, we may burn his memory; nobody will say a word for it; I expect very brave invectives against him to-morrow.

Friday evening, 20th.

Yesterday was different from what I expected; but I never guess right! Who could have expected that a hundred and two men would have defended Wilkes, who would not defend himself, till four in the morning? Yet this was the case of at least fifty, the rest, of which I was one, retired at eleven at night. He was expelled at last, after six divisions. But we have not yet done with him; his Essay on Woman is to be tried next Tuesday in the House of Lords.

The crowds of this week have proved the goodness of our constitutions; that on the Queen's birthday was immoderate; but last night, to see the Prince of Brunswick at the play, exceeded all belief. Your brother James told me this morning, that he went to Covent-Garden at two in the afternoon, to wait till the doors of the playhouse should be opened. He soon found himself buried in such a mob, that he could not even lift his hand to his head, and so remained for five hours, without getting in at last; and though he had stood in the open

* Mr. Martin practised shooting at a target for some months before he fought Wilkes.—See Churchill's "Duellist."

piazza, he perspired so violently that at his return he was forced to change every thread he had on. The shouts, claps, and hussas, to the Prince were immoderate: he sat behind the Princess and her brothers; the galleries called him to come forward. In the middle of the play, he went to be elected a member of the Royal Society, and returned to the theatre, when the applause was renewed. This was the stronger, as there were *other folks** present, who had *no* share in the triumph. When he had gone out, he returned, presented himself in the front of the box, and made a most respectful bow to the audience, who returned it with the loudest acclamations. Do you think he will not go on Wednesday? Adieu!

LETTER LIV.

Arlington Street, Feb. 20, 1764.

The seeds of opposition were sown a long time before they produced any fruit, but a violent crop has shot up this week. I don't know, my dear sir, whether you are not too much of a foreigner to comprehend what I am going to tell you. Does not it sound strange to your Tuscan ears that a member of Parliament, after being expelled the House and fled from his country, should have his complaint tried against the whole secretary's office for breach of his privilege? Learn to adore *Liberty*, when it defends the rights of a man after he has forfeited them!—and don't despise the constitutions of your countrymen, who have endured such fatigue for a week as will give your Italian nerves the headach but to hear of.

On Monday we sat till past midnight hearing evidence on the seizure of Wilkes's papers. The next day we proceeded, closed the evidence at one in the morning, and then went—not to bed—but into a debate. The Opposition moved, To vote the seizure of papers by warrants not specifying names, to be illegal. The ministers insisted, that we should first clear the accused, as having acted according to the forms of office. A quarter after four we divided, when, to the utter confusion of the Court, they proved but 207; we 197. Here your Florentine arithmetic may again be at fault, and not tell you that a majority of *but ten* is a defeat; for you must reckon into the minority, popularity, the hopes of the interested, and their fears, and twenty circumstances that contribute to drown a sinking administration. To give them their due, they dispute the ground inch by inch. We again fell to debating, divided again, 208, and 184; and, in short, sat till a quarter after seven in the morning. On Friday we went on the great question itself, which held us from three o'clock in the afternoon till half an hour after five the next morning. We are again beaten? but how beaten? by 232 against 218; a minority increasing as it is defeated.

* The King and Queen.

Do not you wonder that I am alive? that I am writing to you? Was ever such a week? never. Was there ever so late a day as Tuesday? never. Go and look over the Fasti in your Capitol, you will find nothing like this. If we have out-conquered the Romans, we have out-talked them too—I mean in length of time; I cannot say our eloquence has been equal to our perseverance. There was some spirit towards morning on Tuesday; very little indeed on Friday that was not absolute dulness; yet Mr. Pitt commanded, but so oppressed with gout, and so exhausted, that, though he spoke above an hour, at four in the morning it was as languid as if he had been paid for it. In truth, his enemies were not formidable. We had the five best speakers in the house, him, Charles Townshend, Mr. Conway, Charles Yorke, and Lord George Sackville, who has *deserted* from the Court.

The world you may conclude waits in anxious suspense for the subsequent operations of the campaign. The ministers must try if by *weight of metal* they can maintain their ground. For my part, I am satisfied. I did not believe that there were 197 men who had spirit and virtue enough to resist all temptations, when their liberties were at stake. Since there are so many, it is enough to ward off any danger from such bunglers as the present ministers, the badness of whose characters, assisted by no better parts, is an antidote to their own poison. Their best champion has parts, and shrewdness, but is so impudently profligate, that even absolute power in the Crown, which he is so ready to promote, could not protect him long. This hero of brass, is the Attorney-General Norton, who is qualified to draw up impious manifestoes for a Czarina!

There is nothing in the shape of news except these politics; but they are full employment for the town; and one that will not speedily be concluded. Should even a change of administration happen, I do not see that tranquillity would be restored. Lord Bute has set such humours afloat as may take half a century to reduce into a quiet channel. Even a delay of change may cost some men very dear. The longer the torrent of a nation is opposed, with the more fury is it apt to carry away the dykes.

The foreigners, of whom there are numbers here, for we have not yet lost our fashionableness in Europe, attend our debates assiduously, though even the language is a secret to them! what then must a question of law be! But they think themselves rewarded by *seeing* Mr. Pitt *speak* at five in the morning.

I was diverted with your account of the Princess of Modena's transit through Florence, and of the regales they gave her. I am impatient for the Duke of York's arrival there; but do you know that the speculations of one of your politicians on that journey was not so wide of the mark as you think? *Mi capisce?* I do not mean the simpleton who thought the flames raised by the North-Briton would reach St. James's.

I do not pretend to guess what will happen, for I have laid an embargo on my own prophesying. If any change arrives, this letter will, at least, have prepared you for it. Adieu!

LETTER LV.

Strawberry Hill, March 18, 1764.

As I mean, my dear sir, that my letters should amuse or inform you, I ought not, at least in the first intention, to write them here, whither I generally come to tranquillize myself from folly and bustle, or to compose my mind under any misfortune; my situation at this moment. I have just lost my nephew, Lord Malpas;* a worthy amiable man, whom I have loved from his childhood. But my grief is light compared to that of poor Lady Malpas. He married her sixteen years ago, with no considerable portion of beauty, and less fortune, though of an exceedingly good family. As his father's profusion called for his restoring the estate, we lamented this match; but it proved a blessing: there never was a more prudent, estimable woman. They lived in the happiest union. Above two months ago he went to his regiment in Ireland, and came away ill. He arrived in town last Monday, grew immediately worse; it turned to an inflammation in his bowels, and carried him off in five days.

This has been a fatal month. Lord Hardwicke,† Lord Townshend,‡ and Lord Macclesfield,§ are all dead. The first immensely rich, and, I at least think, no loss. The second has given every thing he could to a housemaid, by whom he had three children; but a great deal reverts to my lady,‖ who cannot enjoy that, or her widowhood, as she would have done a few years ago. She is paralytic; and it affects all that pleased one in her—her speech and spirits. Lord Macclesfield had married *his* mistress, or at least other people's—but she was a gentlewoman, and has behaved extremely well. His Tellership of the Exchequer comes by reversion to Mr. Grenville's son.¶

Don't you wonder what has become of our politics? Did not you expect to hear that the Opposition were pushing their almost triumphant arms into every quarter? No such thing; yet Hannibal** is not enervating himself at Capua. A gouty bed is his bed of roses. Mr. Yorke has been confined with his father, and by his death; and Lord Townshend's death has secluded Charles Townshend. This confinement of the generals might account to the world for the suspension of arms; but I believe is not the true cause. Both sides

* George Cholmondeley, eldest son of George, third Earl of Cholmondeley, by Mary, daughter of Sir Robert Walpole Lord Malpas married Hester, only daughter of Sir Francis Edwards.

† Philip Yorke, Earl of Hardwicke, had been Lord Chancellor.

‡ Charles Viscount Townshend, son of the Secretary of State.

§ George Parker, second Earl of Macclesfield.

‖ Audrey or Ethelreda, only child of Governor Harrison, a lady of celebrated wit.

¶ Eldest son of George Grenville, and afterwards Earl Temple.

** Mr. William Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham.

are treating with the abdicated favourite;* and the balance he cannot hold, he can incline as he pleases. When the Parliament rises, I shall expect he will decide.

Lord Clive has been suddenly nominated, by the East India Company, to the empire of Bengal, where Dupleix has taught all our merchants to affect to be King-making Earls of Warwick, and where the chief things they have made are blunders and confusion. It is amazing that our usurpations have not taught the Indians union, discipline, and courage. We are governing nations to which it takes a year to send our orders.†

I am sorry for what you tell me in your letter of the 18th, that Lord B.‡ does not please in Russia; for his own particular I am very indifferent, but I have great regard for his aunt, Lady Suffolk,§ and know how much it will hurt her if she hears it. That he should be pert *mal à propos*, does not surprise me. He would never have been my choice for such an employment, which ought so little to be given by favour, and is so seldom given for any other reason—so seldom given to a Sir Horace Mann. You know it is my opinion, that the reason of sending so many fools about Europe from all parts of Europe, is, that such are elected whose capacities resemble most the heads of those they are to represent. Adieu! It is time to finish when I attack the *Corps Diplomatique* and the *Patronanza*, though writing to a minister.

P.S. We expect every day to hear of the death of Madame Pompadour.‖

LETTER LVI.

Strawberry Hill, April 9th, 1764.

Thank you, thank you for your accounts of the Duke of York, and of the reception you have given him. Why, you have feasted him as if you were sovereign of Tuscany! But pray, has the marshal consigned to you the revenues of the duchy? I tell you, you will be bankrupt; you will lie above ground in a velvet coffin, like

* Lord Bute.—Ed.

† We manage these matters very differently now-a-days. With the agency of steam at sea, and by an overland journey part of the way, we reduce the voyage between England and India to about *six weeks*.—Ed.

‡ John Hobert, second Earl of Buckinghamshire.

§ Henrietta Hobart, Countess dowager of Suffolk.

‖ Mistress of Louis Quinze, King of France. She was the daughter of a farmer, whose wife, becoming the mistress of M. de Tourneheim, promoted the marriage of her daughter with her paramour's nephew, M. d'Etoiles. On her introduction at court, she attracted the admiration of Louis XV., who, in 1745, created her Marchioness of Pompadour. She was avaricious and extravagant, but used great part of her wealth in promoting the fine arts. She interfered frequently in the affairs of government, and encouraged some measures which were very disastrous to France. She died within a month after the above was written, namely, on April 14th, 1764.—Ed.

the Spanish ambassadors in Westminster Abbey! I did not doubt but the duke's good humour would charm you, and his ease; but I should tremble at your magnificence, unless he were his own elder brother, and could indemnify you. If the rumour of your banquets reaches Naples, you will have that whole city swarming to Florence, and knocking at your gate for that bread which they want at home. Seriously, I feel for the poor Neapolitans, since St. Janaurius has not the secret of feeding them with five loaves and a few small fishes.

We are full of a wonderful book, just published here, by the Chevalier D'Eon, who was secretary to the Duc de Nivernois, and who was made Plenipotentiary in his room, on having carried over the preliminaries, as he had before carried two or three treaties from Petersburgh, for which they never paid him. His honours turned his head, the first consequence of which was his extravagance last October at Lord Halifax's, of which you heard. The affection of Monsieur de Nivernois, and the economy of the Duc de Praslin, concurred to try to place him as secretary with Monsieur de Guerchy. This projected tumble enraged him against innocent Monsieur de Guerchy, and the refusal of his arrears against Praslin. Resentment, pride, and frenzy, precipitated him into a literary war with them. He was recalled, refused, and indeed did not dare to return. Necessity followed, and has made him abominable, for he has not only published the Duc de Praslin's letters, and abused De Guerchy intolerably, but has sacrificed Nivernois' letters too, and the private correspondence between the latter an Praslin, and has without any provocation printed the letters of a private friend of his own, who is under Praslin, and who speaks of his master in a manner that may ruin himself. Praslin, Nivernois, and Guarchy, were intimate friends; the two former talk to one another of the latter in a tone of tender contempt, which the last can never forgive, as Praslin never can the carelessness of Nivernois. Praslin says of Guerchy, "Je crains ses dépêches comme le feu; notre pauvre Guerchy; il ne sait pas du tout écrire—*mais nous* n'avons de meilleur à employer." I am glad of it; and yet, though Guerchy is no clerk, he is far from being contemptible. The Court of France indeed appears to be so; and, for Monsieur de Praslin, it will suffice to give you the measure of his genius, by telling you of one of his plans,—it was to make the French language universal, by publishing a monthly Review! You are to understand, that beside a thousand curious circumstances, D'Eon's book is full of wit and parts; and what makes it more provoking, our ministers know not what to do, nor how to procure any satisfaction to Guerchy.

I am going to realize the very low ideas I have of modern France, by a journey to Paris. By all I see and hear, they seem to be sunk in every light; even in the trifles of which they boast themselves, they have gone backwards a century. They are as formal as we were in Queen Anne's days, and believe they make discoveries, when they adopt what we have had these twenty years. For instance, they begin to see beauties in the antique—every thing must be *à la Grecque*

—accordingly, the lace on their waistcoats is copied from a frieze. Monsieur de Guerchy seeing a Doric fret on a fender at Woburn, which was common before I went abroad, said to the Duchess of Bedford, "Comment! Madame, vous avez là du Grec, sans le savoir!"

A melancholy affair has happened to Lord Ilchester: his eldest daughter, Lady Susan, a very pleasing girl, though not handsome, married herself two days ago at Convent-garden church to O'Brien, a handsome young actor.* Lord Ilchester doated on her, and was the most indulgent of fathers. 'Tis a cruel blow.

Our Parliament is going to rise; an event, which, contrary to custom, will, I fancy, produce politics, instead of suspending them. Lord Bute is returned to town; probably not as a simple spectator. Lord Sandwich's contest at Cambridge has taken a strange turn; the numbers for him and Lord Hardwicke were equal, but both sides pretended to a majority of one. The election broke up in confusion, *et le tout est à recommencer*, with additional heat.

I am writing to you in my lovely gallery, with sufficient indifference to all those squabbles—yet the perspective of public affairs is not so agreeable as to promise anybody a quiet enjoyment of his gallery long! 'Tis fortunate, however, that France has not *de meilleures têtes à employer!*

LETTER LVII.

Strawberry Hill, May 14th, 1764.

I HAVE received three letters from you, my dear sir, on the back of one another, with accounts of the Duke of York's motions, receptions, and entertainments. I give you a thousand thanks for them; they have amused me as much as I suppose they have vexed the phantoms at Rome.† It must be grievous to them to be nosed on their own Catholic dunghill.

I said you would die insolvent; I now tell you you will kill yourself before you are insolvent. You are not made for such fatigues. I approve what you have done as much as his Royal Highness does: but though you *represent* the strongest nation in the world, you must recollect you are one of its weakest members. Your zeal is right, your expense could not be better placed than for your King's brother; but the Lord send you well out of all this! It hurts me too to think that before your festivities are cold you will receive the news of your brother's death. Be blooded, go to bed, and compose yourself. I wish poor Dr. Cocchi, with his calm philosophy, was at your elbow; the agitation of your mind and body will give you a fever.

Your brother Ned forgot to tell me of Horace's intended journey

* See the Collective Edition of Horace Walpole's Letters, 1840, vol. iv. p. 104.—ED.

† The Pretender and his sons.

to Florence: you know how much I have wished it; and though you differed with me, I foresee the transport with which you will embrace him. He is a most amiable lad, and a very *you* in gentleness.

What shall I tell you of England? Nothing that I can approve or that you must disapprove, therefore I shall say little on it, and desire you will say less. I can never doubt your affection; but I am not so selfish as to expect you should hurt yourself merely to show me that you feel for my friends. In short, you and I are so circumstanced at present that it would not be just in me to make you the depositary of my disgusts; nor wise in you to enter into them. I will therefore only write to you news as I used to do, without comments; and you will talk to me in return of things of as little moment. To the immediate purport of this exordium, and to what I am going to tell you, I insist that you make me not one word of reply. If you are silent, I shall know your heart; but if you utter a syllable I will only look upon it as a compliment. Mr. Conway* is turned out of the King's Bed-chamber, and out of his regiment. You will judge of my love for you, when even my love for him is silent on such a proceeding. One would think that he was actuated by the same motives, for his temper, patience, resignation, are beyond example. His calmness and content prove how much his mind is at ease. He would not bear his sufferings with such fortitude if his conduct had not been as pure as virtue itself. Indeed his philosophy goes farther than I like, for it extends to me. He has insisted that, I who am far from such stoicism, should be as mild as he is. It is difficult to govern one's own passions, but much more hard to let any body else govern them. Yet, here I sit, with my arms folded, and am to wait till Virtue is pleased to acknowledge us as her martyrs. She must make haste, or I shall lose my patience; nay, when she does arrive, I believe I shall be so honest as to tell her that she is obliged to Mr. Conway, not to me, for my wearing her livery.

I will inquire for a ship to send you two copies of D'Eon's book, as you desire. It will divert you extremely. He promises another soon, but I conclude he has wasted his materials already, and that his next publication will make him entirely forgotton. He told people in the park the other day, that Madame de Guerchy, who is remarkably plain, was going to Paris to take Madame de Pompadour's place. We do not hear that it is seriously filled up; I mean in the cabinet, for in the Bed-chamber it has long been executed by deputies. Adieu!

* Henry Seymour Conway, only brother of Francis Earl of Hertford, and member for Thetford, was turned out of all his employments for opposing the Administration on the question of the legality of general warrants.

LETTER LVIII.

Strawberry Hill, June 8th, 1764.

Your red riband is certainly postponed. There was but one vacant, which was promised to General Draper, who, when he thought he felt the sword dubbing his shoulder, was told that my Lord Clive could not conquer the Indies a second time without being a Knight of the Bath. This, however, I think will be but a short parenthesis, for I expect that *heaven-born hero** to return from whence he came, instead of bringing hither all the Mogul's pearls and rubies. Yet, before that happens there will probably be other vacancies to content both Draper and you.

You have a new neighbour coming to you, Mr. William Hamilton,† one of the King's equerries, who succeeds Sir James Gray at Naples. Hamilton is a friend of mine, is son of Lady Archibald, and was aide-de-camp to Mr. Conway. He is picture-mad, and will ruin himself in virtù-land. His wife is as musical as he is connoisseur, but she is dying of an asthma.

I have never heard of the present‡ you mention of the box of essences. The secrets of that prison-house do not easily transpire, and the merit of any offering is generally assumed, I believe, by the officiating priests.

Lord Tavistock is to be married to-morrow to Lady Elizabeth Keppel, Lord Albemarle's sister.

I love to tell you an anecdote of any of our old acquaintance, and I have now a delightful one, relating, yet indirectly, to one of them. You know, to be sure, that Madame de Craon's daughter, Madame de Boufflers, has the greatest power with King Stanislaus. Our old friend the Princess de Craon goes seldom to Luneville for this reason, not enduring to see her daughter on that throne which she so long filled with absolute empire. But Madame de Boufflers, who, from his Majesty's age, cannot occupy *all* the places in the palace that her mother filled, indemnifies herself with his Majesty's Chancellor. One day the lively old monarch said, "Regardes, quel joli petit pied, et la belle jambe! Mon Chancellier vous dira le reste." You know this is the form when a King of France says a few words to his Parliament, and then refers them to his chancellor. I expect to hear a great deal soon of the princess, for Mr. Churchill and my sister are going to settle at Nancy for some time. Adieu!

* Expression of Mr. Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham, in the House of Commons on Lord Clive.

† Younger son of Lord Archibald Hamilton. Lady Archibald was the supposed mistress of Frederick Prince of Wales. Mr. Hamilton, afterwards Sir William Hamilton, married, secondly, the notorious Emma Hart. He was the intimate friend of Admiral Lord Nelson. Sir William died in England at an advanced age in 1803.—Ed.

‡ A present from Sir Horace, I believe, to the Queen.

LETTER LIX.

Strawberry Hill, July 27th, 1764.

I KNOW nothing. This is both my text and my discourse, very entertaining matter for a letter. Yet I must write to keep up our acquaintance, and to acknowledge your last. You tell me you are disappointed of the Duke of York's return to Florence. *Consolativi*, you will save a little money and more health; two hoards in which you do not too much abound, my dear sir; and though they are not much more durable enjoyments than honour, they are somewhat more comfortable. I believe my Lady Temple* would at this moment be heartily glad to swop situations with you. Princess Amelia is at Stow, where Lady Temple, Sir Richard Lyttelton, and the Duchess of Bridgwater are all wheeled into the room in gouty chairs.

They talk now of our Parliament meeting in November, which is so much sooner than I expected, that perhaps it may prevent my journey to Paris. In the mean time I am going to the Duke of Devonshire's and Lord Strafford's, and design to know my own mind by the time I return.

Well now, can one honestly call this a letter? Can one have less to say when one has nothing to say? Don't think I am gulping and suppressing politics; they are dead asleep. Their *réveil* perhaps will make some noise. Oh! I had forgot D'Eon: they would not allow him time for witnesses, and so he would not plead, and so he was found guilty, and so his sentence cannot be pronounced till next term, which is not till November, and so I suppose he will go off by October; and so, if you and the post would excuse me, I would finish my letter. Monsieur de Guerchy is gone for the summer months. We do not quite believe he will return, as his sojourn here has been but unpleasant. He is an agreeable gentleman-like sort of body, no genius; but so much the better. It is well for us they had no abler to send. Yet he is a match for those he has to treat with.

Poland seems to be the only busy spot upon the globe at present. I was very well acquainted with Czartoriski, their king† that is to be, when he was here. He was a sensible young man, and spoke English very tolerably. Mr. Conway was more intimate with him, and still more so with Poniatowski, his cousin and friend. Yet I do not believe *my* cousin‡ and friend will go and offer his services to them against General Branicki§, though so ill-treated at home. Adieu, my dear sir.

* Anna Chamber, wife of Richard Grenville, first Earl Temple.
† Czartoriski was not chosen king, but Poniatowski, by the name of Stanislaus II.
‡ General Conway. § Another competitor for the crown.

LETTER LX.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 13, 1764.

I AM afraid it is some thousands of days since I wrote to you; but wo is me! how could I help it? Summer will be summer and peace peace. It is not the fashion to be married, or die in the former, nor to kill or be killed in the latter; and pray recollect if those are not the sources of correspondence. You may perhaps put in a caveat against my plea of peace, and quote Turks Island* upon me; why, to be sure the parenthesis is a little hostile, but we are like a good wife, and can wink at what we don't like to see; besides, the French, like a sensible husband, that has made a slip, have promised us a new topknot, so we have kissed and are very good friends.

The Duke of York returned very abruptly. The town talks of remittances stopped; but as I know nothing of the matter, and you are not only a minister but have the honour of his good graces, I do not pretend to tell you what to be sure you know better than I do.

Old Sir John Barnard† is dead, which he had been to the world for some time; and Mr. Legge.‡ The latter, who was heartily in the minority, said cheerfully just before he died, "that he was going to the majority."

Let us talk a little of the north. Count Poniatowski, with whom I was acquainted when he was here, is King of Poland, and calls himself Stanislaus the Second. This is the sole instance, I believe, upon record, of a second of a name being on the throne while the first was living without having contributed to dethrone him. Old Stanislaus lives to see a line of successors, like Macbeth in the cave of the witches. So much for Poland; don't let us go farther north; we shall find there Alecto herself. I have almost wept for poor Ivan!§ I shall soon begin to believe that Richard III.‖ murdered as many folks as the Lancastrian historians say he did. I expect that this Fury will poison her son next, lest Semiramis should have the bloody honour of having been more unnatural. As Voltaire has unpoisoned so many persons of former ages, methinks he ought to do as much for the present time, and assure posterity that there never was such a lamb as Catharine II., and that, so far from assassinating her own husband and Czar Ivan, she wept over every chicken that she had for dinner. How crimes, like fashions, flit from clime to clime! Murder reigns under the Pole, while you, who are in the very town where Catherine de' Medici was born, and within a stone's throw of

* Which had been seized and taken from us.

† Formerly Lord Mayor of London, and one of the chiefs of the opposition to Sir R. Walpole.

‡ Henry Bilson Legge; he had been Chancellor of the Exchequer.

§ The deposed Czar Ivan, attempting to make his escape, had been murdered; but it is very doubtful whether the Czarina could be privy to his death.

‖ Mr. Walpole afterwards published his *Historic Doubts*, on that subject.

Rome, where Borgia and his holy father* sent cardinals to the other world by hecatombs, are surprised to hear that there is such an instrument as a stiletto. The papal is now a mere gouty chair, and the good old souls don't even waddle out of it to get a bastard.

Well, good night! I have no more monarchs to chat over; all the rest are the most Catholic or most Christian, or most something or other that is divine; and you know one can never talk long about folks that are only excellent. One can say no more about Stanislaus *the first* than that he is the best of beings. I mean, unless they do not deserve it, and then their flatterers can hold forth upon their virtues by the hour.

LETTER LXI.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 21st, 1764.

In your letter of September 22nd, which I received but yesterday, you make excuses my dear sir, for your silence; but in good truth I fear I am not less culpable on that head. I have for many years pleaded summer and the country; you must add to the account now, that I am not only in the country, but in the minority; and you may be sure folks that are disposed to blame, are not told any thing that can be kept from them. London, whither I stroll now and then is a desert. As the Parliament is not to meet till after Christmas, both armies remain in summer quarters. We, *i. e.* the offensive army, have lost one of our generals, the Duke of Devonshire.† He has left General Conway five thousand pounds, which at least was not got out of the plunder. The Duke of Cumberland was reported dead three weeks ago, and the enemy still insist upon his dying; but he has escaped marvellously, by the help of St. Antony's fire, and though they have a good deal of luck, yet not having the Czarina's luck, I think for this time they will be disappointed. You see how frankly I write to hostile quarters, and even by the foe's couriers; but you know, no situation can alter my affection to you, and as usual, I am most indifferent who opens my letters.

I do not wonder you have thought me in France: I have been going and going like an auctioneer's hammer; but I think now that I shall wait the opening of the campaign, and not go till early in the spring. I would not seem a deserter, but have little taste for

* Roderic Bergia, a Spaniard, who, in 1492, was elected Pope, when he changed his name for that of Alexander VI. Cæsar Bergia and Lucretia Bergia were his illegitimate children. The memory of all three is held in detestation. After numerous acts of savage cruelty, the Pope, in conjunction with his son, invited Corveto and eight other newly created cardinals to a banquet, intending to poison them, in order to appropriate their revenues. The deadly draught was, however, by some mistake, administered to the contrivers of the plot. Alexander died the following day, Aug. 3, 1503, in great agony; but his son escaped by the timely application of powerful antidotes.—Ed.

† William Cavendish, fourth Duke of Devonshire.

this warfare. It neither suits my age nor inclinations, which can amuse themselves much better than with politics.

I was pleased with the cardinal's* attention to his father on the subject of Amphitryon Duke of York. It would have been a cruel close of his no reign to have been witness to that triumph. I speak this from pure compassion, not being at all like patriots of former days, whose principles veered to Albano† the moment they left St. James's; but I could never conceive why liking one court less, made them like any other more. I shall live and die in my old-fashioned Whiggism, be the mode what it will.

I am writing to you by Mr. Chute's bedside, who is laid up here with the gout. It is not one of his bad fits, which his perseverance in water does not suffer to come so often as they wish. He desires me to say a thousand kind things to you. As my gout cannot boast of so ancient a descent, I easily keep it in order by the same abstinence. If we had minded good advice from professors of gout, or bad advice from physicians, I do not doubt but he would be now in his grave, and I half a cripple; but we defy wine and all its works. I believe in it no more than in physic. James's powder is my panacea; that is, it always shall be, for, thank God! I am not apt to have occasion for medicines; but I have such faith in this powder, that I believe I should take it if the house were on fire. Have you ever had any of it sent to you? or shall I send you a parcel of papers?

Well, we bid you good night; we have nothing more to tell you; Mr. Chute is going to sleep, and I and my dogs are retiring to the library.

LETTER LXII.

Arlington Street, Nov. 15th, 1764.

Churchill the poet‡ is dead,—to the great joy of the ministry and the Scotch, and to the grief of very few indeed, I believe; for such a friend is not only a dangerous, but a ticklish possession. The next revolution would have introduced the other half of England into his satires, for no party could have promoted him, and wo had betided those who had left him to shift for himself on Parnassus! He had owned that his pen itched to attack Mr. Pitt and Charles Townsend; and neither of them are men to have escaped by their steadiness and uniformity. This meteor blazed scarce four years; for his Rosciad was subsequent to the accession of the present King, before which his

* The Cardinal-Duke of York, second son of the Pretender. Edward Duke of York the king's brother was then at Rome.

† The Pretender had a villa at Albano.

‡ This once famous satirist died of a fever, Nov. 4, 1764, in his thirty-fourth year. "His poetical reputation," says one of his biographers, "seems to have been uniformly declining from the time of his death, and is never likely again to surmount the obstacles of temporary and unpleasing subjects, and careless execution."—Ed.

name was never heard of; and what is as remarkable, he died in nine days after his antagonist, Hogarth.* Were I Charon, I should, without scruple, give the best place in my boat to the latter, who was an original genius. Churchill had great powers; but, besides the facility of outrageous satire, almost all his compositions were wild and extravagant, executed on no plan, and void of the least correction. Many of his characters were obscure even to the present age; and some of the most known were so unknown to *him*, that he has missed all resemblance; of which Lord Sandwick is a striking instance. He died of a drunken debauch at Calais, on a visit to his friend Wilkes, who is going to write notes to his work. But he had lived long enough for himself, at least for his reputation and his want of it, for his works began to decrease considerably in vent. He has left some sermons, for he wrote even sermons; but lest they should do any good, and for fear they should not do some hurt, he had prepared a dedication of them to Bishop Warburton, whose arrogance and venom had found a proper corrector in Churchill. I don't know whether this man's fame had extended to Florence; but you may judge of the noise he made in this part of the world by the following trait, which is a pretty instance of that good breeding on which the French pique themselves. My sister† and Mr. Churchill are in France; a Frenchman asked him if he was Churchill *le fameux poete?* "Non" —"Ma foi, monsieur, tant pis pour vous!"

Wilkes and Churchill, you know, were father and mother of D'Eon. This madman has begotten another, or rather has transmuted his old enemy De Vergy into an ally. The latter having been ten months in prison for debt, has been redeemed by D'Eon, and in gratitude, or in concert, has printed (and sent about) a French *North-Briton*, in which he pretends to confess that he was brought over by Monsieur de Guerchy to cut D'Eon's throat. This legend is so ill put together that, on the face of it, it confutes itself. However, he has taken an affidavit or oath to it; and I hear within these three days he has deposed the same on oath before Judge Wilmot. I am not positive that the last is fact, or whether it does not grow out of the printed affidavit, which I have read. However, the whole embroil is vexatious enough to poor Guerchy, who is in a country where to have any scandal believed it is not necessary to swear to it. His very being a foreigner would induce half this good town to supply the affidavit, without knowing any thing of the matter.

* Hogarth died in the October of this year. His connexion with the Court, as serjeant-painter to the King, induced him to engage against Wilkes and his friends, in a print entitled "The Times," published in 1762. This, having drawn upon him severe strictures in the North Britain, was followed by his well-known caricature of Wilkes which occasioned an angry epistle to the painter by Churchill. Hogarth retaliated by a caricature of the satirical divine, representing him as a bear with a ragged staff. Speaking of this quarrel, Horace Walpole said, "Never did two angry men of their abilities throw mud with less dexterity." Hogarth was buried at Chiswick under an elegant mausoleum, decorated with a poetical inscription by his friend Garrick.—Ed.

† Lady Mary Walpole, only child of Sir Robert Walpole Earl of Orford, by his second wife, and married to Charles son of General Charles Churchill.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 25th.

I had locked up this letter in town and forgot it, when I went to Park-place. It does not signify; my news were of no consequence, and may as well come a week later as not. D'Eon has been cited to receive his sentence in the King's Bench, but absconded. That court issued a search-warrant for him, and a house was broken open, but he was not there. Thus that interlude is almost concluded. Wilkes is, I hear, going to Italy, so you will probably see one of these Sacheverells.

Sir Thomas Clarke, the Master of the Rolls, is dead; and makes some alteration in politics. Norton,* a man whom the world has heard of, and I suppose you too, succeeds him, and Charles Yorke re-accepts the Attorney General's place. This will decrease our ill-starred minority by some votes; but England cannot pay its friends so well as the ministers of England can pay theirs. Well, it all will expedite my journey to France, whither I have so long designed and wished to go, and for which I am in earnest preparing.

I have been in town to hear Manzuoli.† He is not so great as I expected, nor has such pleasing tones as Elisi, though a very fine singer. The Duke of York came into our box, and said a thousand gracious and kind things to me of you, and how sorry he had been to disappoint you in not returning to Florence. I told him how very happy I should make you by this account of his royal highness's goodness. Prince William is Duke of Gloucester, with twelve thousand pounds a-year, like the Duke of York. The papers persisted in creating him Duke of Lancaster. I will tell you my reflection on this. What authority we should think it, if we *could* meet with a Daily Advertiser printed in the reign of Edward I.! if it told us he had created one of his sons Duke of Twickenham, should not we say, that must be true; a paper printed in the capital could not assert a fact which every mortal could contradict? Yet, how are our old histories written? By monks at fifty or a hundred miles perhaps from the metropolis, when there was no post, scarce a highway: those reverend fathers must have been excellently well-informed! I scarcely believe even a battle they relate—never their details.

Adieu! my dear sir; it will not be three months before I am nearer to you by some miles, and with no sea betwixt us—but I fear we shall not meet yet; I don't know.

P.S. I ought to tell you how excessively Manzuoli was applauded.

* Sir Fletcher Norton, afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons and Baron Grantley.

† Giovanni Manzuoli, having attained much celebrity in Italy and Spain, arrived here in 1764. Dr. Burney thus describes his *dèbut*: "The expectations which the vast reputation of this performer had excited were so great, that at the opening of the theatre in November, with the *pasticcio* of Ezio, it was with much difficulty I obtained a place, after waiting two hours at the door. Manzuoli's voice was the most powerful and voluminous soprano that had been heard on our stage since the time of Farinelli; and his manner of singing was grand and full of dignity. The lovers of music in London were more unanimous in approving his voice and talents than those of any other singer within my memory." Manzuoli remained in London only one season.—Ed.

LETTER LXIII.

Arlington Street, Dec. 20, 1764.

I TOLD you in my last that Mr. Yorke was to be Attorney General, but it has ended in his accepting a patent of precedence over the solicitor. Nothing can surpass the foolish figure he has made, which has exposed him to the derision of both sides—and the sum total is, that this is the first time that a Yorke ever did any thing but for money, and yet has been in the wrong.

Yesterday died that man of bustle and noisy name, the Primate of Ireland:* a sacrifice to drunkenness, which, however, was but a libation to ambition, for he was forced to drown his own intellects that he might govern the no-understandings of the Irish—indeed, he succeeded; and from the lowest state of unpopularity had raised himself to full power. You and I remember a primate† who had all the vices of this, and not much inferior parts, but who loved his vices as sages pretend to love virtue, for their own sakes. If Stone did not shine by his gratitude and moderation, at least he had unbounded charity and generosity, and whatever mischief he did, revenge was never the ingredient. I do not think the administration will be disposed to place the metropolitan mitre on an able head again in haste; and I am sure, in that case, they will have little difficulty to furnish themselves to their minds from the English bench, whence I hear the choice is to be made.

You will be concerned to hear, what perhaps will not surprise you more than it did me; the Duke and Duchess of Grafton are parted; on most honourable terms: he alleges nothing but disagreement of tempers, and she readily takes that blame on herself; though in truth, I never saw a case of less mutual complaisance. He gives her her jointure of three thousand pounds a year, and an allowance for their daughter and youngest son; which last, however, is to remain with her but till he is old enough to be taken from the women. The affair has been transacted as a contention of civility and generosity, and yet I think the duke has taken his final resolution.

I know nothing of the Duke of York's squadron going to the Mediterranean, nor should think that either love or politics would carry him thither again. He has just got an addition of three thousand pounds a-year on Ireland: his palace is delightful, and he has already given a ball there to Princess Amelie, at which I was, and where he again mentioned you fully, and with the greatest goodness.

My journey to Paris is fixed for some time in February, where I hear

* Dr. Stone, Archbishop of Armagh.

† Monsieur de Beauvau, eldest son of the Prince de Craon, a Primate of Lorraine.

I may expect to find Madame de Boufflers,* Princess of Conti. Her husband is just dead; and you know the House of Bourbon have an alacrity at marrying their old mistresses.† She was here last year, being extremely infected with the *Anglo-manie*, though I believe pretty well cured by her journey. She is past forty, and does not appear ever to have been handsome, but is one of the most agreeable and sensible women I ever saw; yet I must tell you a trait of her that will not prove my assertion. Lady Holland asked her how she liked Strawberry-Hill? She owned she did not approve of it, and that it was not *digne de la solidité Angloise*. It made me laugh for a quarter of an hour. They allot us a character we have not, and then draw consequences from that idea, which would be absurd, even if the idea were just. One must not build a Gothic house because the nation is *solide*. Perhaps, as every thing now in France must be *à la Grecque*, she would have liked a hovel if it pretended to be built after Epictetus's—but Heaven forbid that I should be taken for a philosopher! Is it not amazing that the most sensible people in France can never help being domineered by sounds and general ideas? Now every body must be a *géomètre*, now a *philosophe*, and the moment they are either, they are to take up a character and advertise it: as if one could not study geometry for one's amusement or for its utility, but one must be a geometrician at table, or at a visit! So the moment is settled at Paris that the English are solid, every Englishman must be wise, and, if he has a good understanding, he must not be allowed to play the fool. As I happen to like both sense and nonsense, and the latter better than what generally passes for the former, I shall disclaim, even at Paris the *profondeur*, for which they admire us; and I shall not cease to admire Madame de Boufflers, though her nonsense is not the result of nonsense, but of sense, and consequently not the genuine nonsense that I honour. When she was here, she read a tragedy in prose to me, of her own composition, taken from the Spectator: the language is beautiful and so are the sentiments.

There is a Madame de Beaumont‡ who has lately written a very pretty novel, called Lettres du Marquis du Roselle. It is imitated, too, from an English standard, and in my opinion a most woful one; I mean the works of Richardson, who wrote those deplorably tedious lamentations, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison, which are pictures of high life as conceived by a bookseller,§ and romances as

* This was not the Marquise de Boufflers, daughter of the Prince de Craon, and favourite of King Stanislaus, mentioned in a former letter, but the Countesse de Boufflers, mistress of the Prince de Conti.

† Louis XVI. married Madame de Maintenon, and his son was supposed to be married to Mademoiselle Chouin.

‡ Wife of Monsieur Elie de Beaumont, a celebrated lawyer.

§ Richardson was not a bookseller, but a printer.—W. His novels were exceedingly popular at the time of their publication. Sir Walter Scott observes, "It is no disrespect to Richardson to say, that he could not have had many opportunities of seeing the manners of high life; for society is formed upon principles different entirely from a selection of the best and wisest men: and the author's condition, though far from being low, indigent, or disreputable, placed him in an humbler and happier rank. But there is

they would be spiritualized by a Methodist teacher: but Madame de Beaumont has almost avoided sermons, and almost reconciled sentiments and common sense. Read her novel—you will like it.

LETTER LXIV.

Arlington Street, Jan. 13, 1765.

Are not you growing impatient for news, now the Parliament is opened? Here is a new year begun, the twenty-fourth of our correspondence! Orestes and Pylades are not to be named with us; their friendship would have cooled in a quarter of the time. Well, what do you expect? that, having lost all our chiefs, we have laid down our arms, and been fined in the Starchamber, or what would come to much the same thing for the people, that we have sold our remnant of opposition for half-a-dozen pensions? You are mistaken; there are a few drops of Mercian and Cambrian blood still left in our veins. The Address on Thursday went unanimously, in answer to a very tame speech; but not till after a very spirited dialogue between Mr. Conway and Mr. Grenville, in which the former shone greatly, painting in strong colours the scandalous treatment he had received from a *profligate* administration; the epithet was his, but I believe will remain theirs. Lord Granby* declared warmly against dismissions of officers for their conduct in Parliament. This prologue was brief, but smart. We shall probably have nothing particular till Tuesday se'nnight, which is fixed for a renewal of the great question on the Warrants, the subject of which has been revived by a large pamphlet, that is in the highest vogue, called an Inquiry into the Doctrine of Libels. Though bulky, it is already at its third edition; nor can all the court-lawyers, court-scribblers, or court-liars, hitherto frame an answer to it. They nibble at its heels, but cannot fix a tooth in it.

The King's speech acquainted us with a future marriage between his youngest sister† and the Prince Royal of Denmark. Princess Lousia, who is older, and has a very pretty face, is of uncommonly small stature, and unhealthy.

one sort of good-breeding which is natural and unchangeable; and another, which, consisting of an acquaintance with the evanescent manners and fashions of the day, is merely conventional, and is perpetually changing, like the modes of dress observed in the same circles. *The principles of the first are imprinted in every bosom of sense and delicacy.*"—Ed.

* John Marquis of Granby.

† The Princess Matilda, born after the death of her father, Frederick, Prince of Wales, and married on the 1st of October 1776, to Christian, King of Denmark, who had recently succeeded to the crown. He regarded his consort with suspicion and dislike, though she possessed the most amiable qualities. Her intimacy with the minister Struensee, it will be recollected, formed a ground of criminal accusation against her. The Queen was imprisoned, until the Court of St. James's insisted upon her release. She was then conveyed to the city of Zell, in the Electorate of Hanover, where she died, March 10, 1775.—Ed.

There is another approaching wedding notified, between Lord Shelburne and Lady Sophia Carteret, the only child of our old friend Lady Sophia Fermor, by Lord Granville. Her face has the beauty of neither, and is like her half-sisters;* but her air and person would strike you from the strong resemblance to her mother. She has above thirty thousand pounds, and he two and twenty thousand a-year. Their children will have the seeds in them of some extraordinary qualities, look whither you will.

There has been a bustle in the cabinet, more remarkable for its symptoms than its effects. That busy ambitious prelate, Stone, is dead, as I told you I think in my last. Mr. Grenville, believing himself possessed of power, because he runs all the risk of it, offered the archiepiscopal mitre about the town, without remembering to ask if it was in his disposal. Two English bishops declined it. Lord Granby then solicited it for his tutor, Ewer of Llandaff, and was supported by the imaginary minister; but the *Lord Lieutenant* (the most acute commentators read, *Lord Bute*) carried off the primacy for Robinson, Bishop of Kildare. The Duke of Bedford, still more a phantom than Grenville, imagined he could obtain the nomination, and demanded it for a Scoto-Hibernian, Bishop Carmichael; but the Scotch are too wise for many of them to embark in that channel.

Well, well! all this is paltry, and not in the great style of our country; these are such little cabals as happen in every nation. 'Tis the marvellous, the eccentric, that characterizes Englishmen. Come, you shall have an event in the genuine taste, and before it has been pawed and vulgarized. It is fresh this very day. There is somebody dead somewhere—strong marks of novelty you see—in Somersetshire or Wiltshire, I think, who has left two hundred thousand pounds† to Mr. Pitt, to Mr. William Pitt, to *the* Mr. Pitt, the man who frightened the great Mogul so three years ago, and who had liked to have tossed the Kings of France and Spain in a blanket, if somebody had not cut a hole in it and let them slip through. Somebody the first, was called Pinsent or Vincent—the town and I are not sure of the name yet; but it is certain he never saw the said Mr. Pitt—I hope that was not the best reason for the legacy. The parson of the parish, who made the will, has sent word to Hayes‡ that it is lodged in the housekeeper's hands, who has command from the defunct not to deliver it but to the legatee, or order. Unluckily, Mr. Pitt is in bed with the gout in his hand, and cannot even sign the order; however, Lady Chatham has sent for the will, and it is supposed her order will suffice. You may depend on all this latter part; I had it but two hours ago from Lady Temple, whose lord has been

* The Countess of Cowper and the Marchioness of Tweeddale, younger daughters of Lord Granville by his first wife.

† Sir William Pynsent's legacy to Mr. Pitt. was worth about forty thousand pounds. The "two hundred thousand," asserted by popular report, was in the usual style of exaggeration.—Ed.

‡ Villa of Mr. Pitt, near Bromley, in Kent.

to Hayes this morning on this affair. The deceased, it seems, had voted against the first Treaty of Utrecht, and had lived to see a second.* I do believe now that this country will be saved at last, for we shall have real patriots, when the Opposition pays better than the Court. Don't you think that Mr. Pitt would give half his legacy that he had never accepted a pension? It is very singular; ten thousand pounds from old Marlborough,† a reversion of a great estate from Jack Spencer, and this fortune out of the clouds! Lord Bath indeed—but I never heard it was not for his virtues or services—was in so many testaments, that they used to call him emphatically, *Will* Pulteney—it is more pleasant to be called *Will* Pitt from such tributes to his merit. Adieu till the next big event.

LETTER LXV.

Arlington Street, Feb. 11th, 1765.

You have, no doubt, expected to hear from me for some time; but every week does not produce events, nor every session revolutions. We have had but one remarkable day since my last letter to you. It was on the old, but important question of General Warrants; and, if it is remembered, it will be owing more to the weight of the subject than to the discussion. We sat till near six in the morning; but as the debate had been so exhausted last year, and has been so agitated in print ever since, you cannot marvel if it produced little new. The numbers on the division were 224, to 185. I expected that we of the minority should be fewer, considering the deaths, accidents, and desertions that have happened. It is even comfortable to find that there are one hundred and eighty-five men who prefer any thing to their interest; and though beaten, we extorted a universal confession that general warrants are illegal; what excuse they who made this confession left to themselves for not going farther, let their posterity tell by their blushes! One man, indeed, there was, who had the front not to condemn himself in the same manner, I mean Norton the Attorney General—when he stabs a parent, he does not, like Brutus, cover his face. The hero of the day was the famous Colonel Barré—a man, or I am much mistaken, whose fame will not stop here. He spoke with infinite wit and humour, and with that first of merits to me, novelty: his manner is original. He spoke too with extreme bitterness, which is almost new again; so civil have Parliaments been of late. He commended the present Secretaries of State, but foresaw it possible that, if one of them should die, his successor might be the most dissolute and abandoned sad dog in the kingdom.

* The Treaty of Paris.

† The Duchess Dowager of Marlborough left Mr. Pitt ten thousand pounds, and her grandson, John Spencer, entailed the Sunderland estate upon him after his own son; but that son, afterwards Earl Spencer, cut off that entail as soon as he came of age.

There sat Sandwich under the gallery, while the whole house applied the picture to him! not a word was offered in his defence. You will ask if he was thunderstruck? yes, say those who were near him. Yet so well did he recover the blow that at three in the morning he commenced an intrigue with a coffee-girl, who attends in the Speaker's chambers.

Mr. Pitt, whom we begin to know only by tradition, was laid up with the gout; so he is still, which postpones any farther questions from the Opposition, as he has deigned to promise his countenance, if he can get to town. You have seen in all the papers the great fortune that has been left to him by Sir William Pynsent, an old whig baronet, who quitted the world on the treaty of Utrecht, and lived to pass this just censure on its counterpart, the Treaty of Paris. 'Tis a noble testimonial; and yet, if vice and virtue fight with the same weapon, gold, I fear the odds will be on the side of the former! Few *sad dogs* will wait for last wills and testaments.

We are likely to have another solemn puppet show, the trial of a peer. Lord Byron has killed a Mr. Chaworth in a duel at a tavern. I, who should like the trial of a Laud or a Strafford, as a wholesome spectacle now and then, am not interested about an obscure lord, whose birth alone procures his being treated like an overgrown criminal. This quarrel was about game; and the very topic should send it to the Quarter Sessions.

Lord Milton has desired me to make his and my lady's acknowledgments to you for your civilities to Mr. Damer. I was desired too, to mention to you the future arrival of Earl Berkeley; but I do not know him, nor trouble my head about him. You are attention itself to every body; an Earl would naturally not escape you: that is full enough.

You will ask when I go to Paris? It is the question I ask my friends every day. Probably now not till the Parliament rises, as the session is likely to end by Easter. At present I am confined with a bad cold, which I increased at our late day, and a fever; but as I shall take James's powder to-night, you may be sure that I shall be quite well to-morrow. Adieu!

LETTER LXVI.

Arlington Street, March 20, 1765.

I DON'T remember the day when I was reduced to complain, in winter and Parliament-tide, of having nothing to say. Yet it is this kind of nothing that has occasioned my long silence. There has not been an event from a debate to a wedding, capable of making a paragraph. Such calms often forerun storms: the worst fits of the gout befall those who are not subject to little fevers.

Our eyes have been lately turned to very serious danger; the King has been extremely ill, with a fever, violent cough, and a humour fallen on his breast. He was blooded four times, recovered enough to

take the air, but caught new cold, and was cupped last Friday. However, he has been out in his chaise every day since, and we trust the danger is over; though I doubt he is not quite well. You will shudder at the idea of such a long minority at such a time, and not wonder if all parties were equally alarmed. The Duke of Cumberland's state is less precarious, his fate more certain, and verging fast to a conclusion; yet he has ordered his equipages for Newmarket, and persists in going thither if he is alive; he seems indifferent both where he dies, and when.

This is absolutely the whole of my public gazette. Nor have I any thing private to tell you.

We have got the renowned Schoualoff* here; he does not answer my expectation, whatever he did the late Czarina's—that is, he is large, and not handsome. We expect lord Buckingham every hour, who has been at the Hague some time, where he hovers on the wings of a husband, not of a lover. Perhaps you wonder more at my being still here: I have now fixed the first of June for my journey to Paris, for having advanced so far towards the spring, I cannot resign Lilac-tide and the month of May at Strawberry-hill. I do not propose passing Paris, nor shall break a spear against the Wild Beast† in the Gevaudan, which the French seem as much afraid of as if the soul of Mr. Pitt had transmigrated into a hyena. The peasants believe it to be a sorcerer, and one of them swears that it said to him as it leaped a river. "N'est-ce pas assez bien sauter pour un homme de quatre-vingt ans?" Pray set this against our ghost in Cock-lane; then cast up the two accounts, and tell me how much this age is enlightened! How little Sir Isaac Newton thought that in a little more than thirty years, he should be less talked of than a second dragon of Wantley!

What part does Wilkes take at Rome? Does he condescend, like Lord Bolingbroke, to be first minister to the Pretender? or does he give the Pope the lie, and tell him that the Jesuits deserved to be annihilated? or will he, like Bonneval and Riperda, turn Mussulman at last? Lord Temple is a *caput mortuum* since Churchill died and Wilkes was banished. But this state of inaction cannot last; England must sail into another latitude, before it ceases to produce extraordinary head-pieces. I could comment at large on this text, but I may as well dismiss you, as write revelations instead of a letter. Good night!

* Count Schoualoff, favourite and supposed husband of the Czarina Elizabeth. He was a most worthy man, and though he enjoyed absolute power for twelve years, did not do an injury or make an enemy.

† Prodigious was the noise made about that beast, which was believed to be really some famished or mad wolves. At last, in the following summer, a very large one was killed by a peasant and carried to Versailles, where I saw it in the Queen's antechamber, and the peasant who killed it, as if it had been a public enemy!

LETTER LXVII.

Arlington Street, May 11th, 1765.

Mr. Stanley, one of the Lords of the Admiralty, has done me the honour of desiring a letter of recommendation to you, as he is going to pass the summer in Italy. His character and abilities must be too well known to you to make my interest in your friendship necessary, even if he should wish for greater share in your acquaintance than your constant attention and good nature direct you to offer to your countrymen in general: yet it is so flattering to me to seem to contribute to your connexion, that when I beg you to exceed your common civilities on his account, I am determined to please myself with thinking that you do it on mine.

LETTER LXVIII.

Strawberry Hill, May 14th, 1765.

You must be surprised at my silence: it has been of longer duration than I ever practised with regard to you, my dear sir, except in the most inactive months of summer. It commenced indeed for want of matter—it has continued from incessant occupation. For some time I had nothing to tell you, but the trial of Lord Byron, a solemn scene for a worthless man, but whose former faults had given handle to ill-nature to represent him as guilty of an event, which truly it had been very difficult for him to avoid. He escaped with life; and recovered some portion of honour, if that can comfort him, after the publicity made of his character, and the misfortune of killing an amiable man, but one not blameless in the late instance.

This whole history has, however, been totally swallowed up and forgotten for some weeks in a memorable discussion, in which, though the generality of the world has been much more indifferent to it than I could possibly have expected, the political agents and spectators have been deeply interested; and which, if it should not suddenly produce the consequences that ought naturally to attend it, may give birth to very serious events sooner or later. It has occupied me so much, that for above a month I have totally neglected every other avocation. The detail I could not give under many voluminous pages: I will endeavour to sketch out enough of the great lines to give you some insight into the present strange situation of affairs; and as I mean to send this by a private hand to Paris, though it may retard its journey, I shall speak to you more openly than I have chosen to do for these two or three years, more from attention to your interest than to my own, which I have plainly not considered, and of which you know I have never been very careful.

My Lady Denbigh* told me, at the very beginning of this winter, that when Monsieur Chavigny was minister here from France several years ago, he said to her, "I have observed, that when the warmest sessions have been expected in Parliament, they have proved the most inactive; and then when all was thought to be over, somebody has cried out, 'Voilà un liévre!' Another has replied, 'Il n'y a point de lièvre;' and at last every body has run to see if there was a hare or not." This I have known to be a very just remark, twice at least in my memory; formerly, on the Marriage Act, and the bill of Regency in 1751; and now it tallies to the occasion, as if drawn from it.

The King's late illness, and the precariousness of his health, naturally pointed to a provision for a regency; but many secret causes seem to impede the necessary steps. The propriety of the Queen being regent was combated by the jealousy such a declaration might give the princess; and the known and almost avowed hatred between Lord Bute and the present ministry, made both sides averse to the measure. *They* hoped to secure their power if the King should die without such a provision; and *he* could not wish to declare a council of regency, which would either confirm his enemies in their station or oblige him to remove them immediately, to which the irresolution of his nature, and the difficulty of supplying their places, did not incline him; for the Scotch he did not dare to bring more forward. The Tories are too contemptible to be raised, and the Opposition seem more hostile to him than to the ministers. The measure was, however, so pressed upon him that he yielded, and the King himself notified his intention to the Cabinet-council, of which the five chieftains were in strict union, that is, the Chancellor,† the Duke of Bedford, Grenville, and the two secretaries.‡ Judge of their surprise, in this situation of things, when they learned that the regent was to be reserved, *in petto*, to the King's secret nomination; that *any one* of the royal family might be the person; and that the King's four brothers and uncle were to be left out of the council, but with a civil intimation that four of the five might be admitted by the four nominations which the King had reserved to himself, as his grandfather had done. Nothing could have been devised less palatable to the princes, to the ministers, or to the people. From the first band, however, there were heard few murmurs except from the Duke of Cumberland, who determined in person to oppose the bill. The people, who have little affection for any one person concerned, waited both for event and its consequences with much indifference; and though egged on a little by some of the Opposition, and more by the Administration, have taken little or no part in the affair. But the ministers have not been so neutral. Their first step was, to be disgusted; their next, to swallow their disgusts, and keep their places. Then they grumbled, and prevailed to have the Queen's name inserted, though merely as one that might be regent. Then came the bill itself in the

* Isabella de Jonghe, a Dutchwoman.
† Lord Northington. ‡ The Earls of Sandwich and Halifax.

House of Lords. There Lord Lyttelton moved to address thé King to name the person he would recommend for Regent; but the motion was rejected by a great majority, after Lord Temple and eight more lords had divided against the whole bill (after which Lord Temple attended it no more.) I should have told you, that after the bill had been read the first time, the King gave up the four secret nominations, and recommended the five princes, reserving only a power of filling up their places, if any of them should die, by a secret act. On this the Duke of Cumberland went to Newmarket.

On the second reading, a doubt was started whether the Princess Dowager is of the royal family. The Chancellor, who had been of the contrary opinion in council, declared she was; Lord Mansfield, who had in council agreed with the Chancellor, would not tell his opinion in the house, and absented himself. In this uncertainty, the Duke of Richmond proposed to insert the name of the princess in the bill; but the motion was rejected. The very next day, to the astonishment of mankind, Lord Halifax,* by the King's order, as was understood, moved the specific words of the Duke of Richmond, (which, I should have mentioned, restrained the persons capable of being regent to the princess and the descendants of the late King, resident in England,) singly omitting the Princess of Wales—and it passed. The consternation of the princess's and Lord Bute's friends soon informed the world how little they approved, or had been acquainted with, a stroke that stigmatized the King's mother by act of Parliament! The truth I believe is, that the Duke of Bedford and the two secretaries had surprised the King into an acquiescence with this most indecent and outrageous measure, and had not given him time to consider, communicate, or retract it.

From the Lords then came the bill to us. In the meantime Mr. Pitt, who has not once honoured us with his presence this session, and who was announced as a determined opposer of the whole bill, was opportunely seized with a fit of the gout—and probably waits the event of this amazing confusion. Men of common sense concluded, that when so popular a point was gained, the bill would run its course without interruption: but my friends† who are not exquisite in distinguishing between little objects and great, and who did not see, what every mortal else saw, the disunion between the Court and the Administration, and transported at being delivered from their apprehensions of being checked or traversed by Mr. Pitt, who will not connect with them, went on haggling about, and squabbling for or against every trifle in the bill, and succeeding in none. Those

* Lord Halifax, and some said Lord Sandwich too, went suddenly to the Queen's house, and taking the King by surprise, told him that the House of Commons would certainly exclude the Princess Dowager from the bill, which would be such a disgrace, that his Majesty had better propose himself to omit her name. He consented; and Lord Halifax drove as fast as possible to the House of Lords, where very few were yet assembled, and made the motion, whispering, that it was by his Majesty's command, and then immediately moved to adjourn the house, before any of the princess's and Lord Bute's friends were arrived.

† The Opposition.

very impediments, like a turnstile which hinders you, but does not stop you, gave time to the Court to rally their spirits and assume their indignation; the consequence of which was, that the Tories actually moved to reinstate the name of the princess. Nor were the Ministers idle; but by every gross art and encouragement plied the Opposition to reject the motion, giving them room to expect their support. The Duke of Cumberland's resentment, the Duke of Newcastle's folly, and the violence of some of the young men, joined in this senseless and provoking insult: but the greater part, from unwillingness to make themselves desperate, from more temper, or from more experience, or from a sensible desire of widening and profiting by so unexpected a breach, refused to concur in this phrenzy; accordingly the motion passed, with slight opposition and no division—yet the next day, on the report, the Duke of Bedford's friends openly, and Grenville more covertly, drew the senseless zealots into a division, which at last proved but 39 to 169: the Duke of Bedford's friends retiring rather than vote *for* the princess.

Still the great difficulty remained, to make the lords eat their words,—but it proved no difficulty at all. Sandwich moved to agree to our amendment, and Bedford and Halifax sat silent, the latter making the most abject and contemptible figure one can conceive.

Well! I have contrived to crowd this transaction, so fruitful of events and revolutions, into one sheet of paper. You will be curious to know the consequences; and so am I; yet I much question whether any material will follow. If they do not, the Opposition may thank themselves. Lord Bute may affect to be satisfied with having set aside a mark, that will remain indelible; and the mean part the ministers have acted, may make him think he can nowhere find tools who will submit to greater indignities. If he doubts the King's life, he may fear to show his resentment. Yet the affront is so glaring, while at least Lord Halifax remains unpunished, that one can scarce conceive no vengeance being exercised. Still it remains to be seen if Mr. Pitt will not once more be sent for. His terms may be high, and yet surely it is worth while to grant any! But I will reason no farther,—remember this letter is for no eye but your own.

Mr. Stanley, who has negotiated so much at Paris, where he is in the highest vogue, has desired me to give him a letter to you, as he is going to Italy for the summer. I am very well acquainted with him, but have no friendship; yet I should wish you to be particularly attentive to him, and for your own sake. He has very good parts, much knowledge, and good-breeding, but his manner is not agreeable. I only warn you to be upon your guard: don't talk of *me* more than is necessary, nor of politics more than you can help. In these distractions, I do not know which way he particularly leans, and you had better seem willing to be informed by him, than already instructed.

The papers tell me your nephew and Lady Lucy are married, on

which I congratulate you; but I know no more of it. Indeed, as I told you in the outset, all my late ideas have been absorbed in politics—not to get deeper into them, but to spy an opportunity of retreating: it is terrible to have to do with many fools, and not with enough! Adieu!

LETTER LXIX.

Arlington Street, May 25, 1765, sent by way of Paris.

My last I think was of the 16th. Since that we have had events of almost every sort. A whole administration dismissed, taken again, suspended, confirmed; an insurrection; and we have been at the eve of a civil war. Many thousand weavers rose, on a bill for their relief being thrown out of the House of Lords by the Duke of Bedford. For four days they were suffered to march about the town with colours displayed, petitioning the King, surrounding the House of Lords, mobbing and wounding the Duke of Bedford, and at last besieging his house, which, with his family, was norrowly saved from destruction. At last it grew a regular siege and blockade; but by garrisoning it with horse and foot litterally, and calling in several regiments, the tumult is appeased. Lord Bute rashly taking advantage of this unpopularity of his enemies, advised the King to notify to his ministers that he intended to dismiss them,—and by this step, no succedaneum being prepared, reduced his Majesty to the alternative of laying his crown at the foot of Mr. Pitt, or of the Duke of Bedford; and as it proved at last, of both. The Duke of Cumberland was sent for, and was sent to Mr. Pitt, from whom, though offering almost *carte blanche*, he received a peremptory refusal. The next measure was to form a ministry from the Opposition. Willing were they, but timid. Without Mr. Pitt nobody would engage. The King was forced to desire his old ministers to stay where they were. They, who had rallied their very dejected courage, demanded terms, and hard ones indeed—*promise* of never consulting Lord Bute, dismission of his brother, and the appointment of Lord Granby to be Captain General—so soon did those tools of prerogative talk to their exalted sovereign in the language of the Parliament to Charles I.

The King, rather than resign his sceptre on the first summons, determined to name his uncle Captain General. Thus the commanders at least were ready on each side; but the Ministers, who by the Treaty of Paris showed how little military glory was the object of their ambition, have contented themselves with seizing St. James's without bloodshed. They gave up their general, upon condition Mr. Mackenzie* and Lord Holland† were sacrificed to them, and, tacitly, Lord Northumberland,‡ whose government they bestow on Lord

* Brother of Lord Bute. † Henry Fox Lord Holland.
‡ The Lord Northumberland's son was married to Lord Bute's daughter.

Weymouth without furnishing another place to the earl, as was intended for him. All this is granted. Still there are inexplicable riddles. In the height of negotiation, Lord Temple was reconciled to his brother George, and declares himself a fast friend to the late and present ministry. What part Mr. Pitt will act is not yet known—probably not a hostile one; but here are fine seeds of division and animosity sown!

I have thus in six words told you the matter of volumes. You must analyze them yourself, unless you have patience to wait till the consequences are the comment. Don't you recollect very similar passages in the time of Mr. Pelham, the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Granville, and Mr. Fox? But those wounds did not penetrate so deep as these! Here are all the great, and opulent noble families engaged on one side or the other. Here is the King insulted and prisoner, his mother stigmatized, his uncle affronted, his favourite persecuted. It is again a scene of Bohuns, Montforts, and Plantagenets.

While I am writing, I received yours of the 4th, containing the revolutions in the fabric and pictures of the palace Pitti.* My dear sir, make no excuse; we each write what we have to write; and if our letters remain, posterity will read the catastrophes of St. James's and the Palace Pitti with equal indifference, however differently they affect you and me now. For my part, though agitated like Ludlow or my Lord Clarendon on the events of the day, I have more curiosity about Havering in the Bower, the jointure house of ancient royal dowagers, than about Queen Isabella herself. Mr. Wilkes, whom you mention, will be still more interested, when he hears that his friend Lord Temple has shaken hands with his foes Halifax and Sandwich; and I don't believe that any amnesty is stipulated for the exile. Churchill, Wilkes's poet, used to wish that he was at liberty to attack Mr. Pitt and Charles Townshend,—the moment is come, but Churchill is gone! Charles Townshend has got Lord Holland's place†—and yet the people will again and again believe that nothing is intended but their interest!

When I recollect all I have seen and known, I seem to be as old as Methuselah: indeed I was born in politics,—but I hope not to die in them. With all my experience, these last five weeks have taught me more than any other ten years; accordingly, a retreat is the whole scope of my wishes; but not yet arrived.

Your amiable sister, Mrs. Foote, is settled in town; I saw her last night at the opera with Lady Ailesbury. She is enchanted with Manzuoli—and you know her approbation is a test, who has heard all the great singers, learnt of all, and sings with as much taste as any of them. Adieu!

* The Palace of the Great Duke at Florence.
† Paymaster of the Forces.

LETTER LXX.

Arlington Street, June 26, 1765.

You have known your country, my dear sir, in more perilous situations, but you never knew it in a more distracted one in time of peace than it is in at present. Nor had I ever more difficulty to describe its position to you. Times of party have their great outlines, which even such historians as Hollingshed or Smollet can seize. But a season of faction is another guess thing. It depends on personal characters, intrigues, and minute circumstances, which make little noise, and escape the eyes of the generality. The details are as much too numerous for a letter, as, when the moment is past, they become too trifling and uninteresting for history. I can only endeavour to preserve the thread, but it is impossible to develope all its windings.

After the King had been obliged to take back his old ministers, the hard terms they imposed upon him, added to their late insults, made him treat them with the greatest coldness. He not only smiled on the Opposition, but bestowed every employment that fell on the Duke of Cumberland's or Lord Bute's friends. This situation was not likely to last. Accordingly, this day fortnight, the Duke of Bedford, in the name of himself and his three colleagues,* *prescribed a month* to his Majesty in which he *must* determine whether he would take a new administration, or keeping his old ministers, smile on them and frown on their adversaries—a hard lesson to a prince, whom these very men had complimented with so much prerogative! He made no answer, but on the following Monday sent the Duke of Grafton to invite Mr. Pitt to Court. He went, and in four audiences found such facilities to all his demands, that a change was believed infallible. This day was even marked in the general expectation as the era of a new administration. I, who am not in the list of *aspirants*, had stayed in the country till this very day, wishing for the event, but content to know it when it happened. When I arrived, at four o'clock, to my surprise I heard that Lord Temple, who was to have the Treasury, had been yesterday with the King, and declared he could not take it, giving no other reason than that *he had a delicacy which he could not mention, and which must ever remain a secret.* The extraordinariness of the declaration, after Mr. Pitt had gone so far, amazes every body, though this is the third negotiation of individually the same sort that has been broken off thus abruptly. The mysterious words are commonly supposed to allude to Lord Temple's reconciliation with his brother; yet why he should not plead *that*, is not easily solved, unless he has connected with the Duke of Bedford too. Mr. Pitt's declarations and conduct seem not to tally with such a league. In this very transaction he has declared himself hostilely against the Duke of Bedford's people; and in an audience of the King this very

* George Grenville, Lord Halifax, and Lord Sandwich.

morning, expressed himself still ready to come in, if Lord Temple would—but it is an intrigue which time alone can explain.

Thus you see all is afloat again. Whether a new administration can or will be formed without Mr. Pitt; whether the King must submit again to his old ministers, what new terms they will exact, or whether he will grant them, is yet uncertain. Should he bend to all they demand, it can but aggravate the wound, not close it. Consequently no such system can be looked upon as permanent. My own opinion is, that after some more convulsions, it will end in an administration of Mr. Pitt, Lord Temple, and George Grenville, unless one or more of them should die.

You know, my dear sir, I never expect you to answer me on these delicate subjects. I even send this by a safe conveyance to Lord Hertford at Paris, as I did a former one, which I hope you received.

How I envy you who hear nothing but the distant rumour of these unpleasant scenes! How vexatious to me to be engaged in them! When men are involved in politics from ambition, interest, or inclination, they must take the bitter with the sweet; I, who have been forced into them by principle and friendship, lament the tranquillity I have lost, and for which nothing can pay me but the restoration of it. I sigh for the moment of recovering my liberty, and fervently vow to myself never to be in a situation more in which even duty can call upon me to take a part. I could explain and justify this determination in the most ample manner; but the time is not yet come for doing it. Adieu!

LETTER LXXI.

Arlington Street, July 12th, 1765.

If you knew with what difficulty and pain I write to you, you would allow, my dear sir, that I have some zeal for your satisfaction. I have been extremely ill for these last sixteen days with the gout all over me, in head, stomach, and both feet; but as it never budged from the latter, it soon attracted all the venom from the upper parts. Oh! it is a venomous devil! I have lain upon a couch for two days, but I question whether I shall be so alert to-day, as I have had a great deal of pain in the night, and little sleep. Still, I must write to you, as it is both for your satisfaction and my own, and as this is the first moment that I have enjoyed *the liberty of the post* for these three years. We may say what we will; I may launch out, and even *you* need not be discreet, when our letters pass through *Mr. Conway's office*. He has already himself told you in form that he is your principal, and I repeat how glad of it I am for your sake, as well as for all others. I told him last night that I believed the Duke of York had obtained the promise of a red riband for you, and begged *that* promise at least of the late odious ministers might be fulfilled, and that none of our

new aspirants might be thrust in before you. He readily, with most kind expressions towards you, promised me his interest.

Well! at last the four tyrants are gone! undone by their own insolence, and unpitied. Their arrogance to the King, and proscriptions of every body but their own crew, forced his Majesty to try any thing rather than submit to such task-masters. Mr. Pitt, who was ready and willing to have assumed the burden, was disappointed by the treachery of Lord Temple, who has reconciled and leagued himself with his brother George. In this distress, the Duke of Cumberland has persuaded the Opposition to accept and form a ministry. Without Mr. Pitt, they were unwilling; but pressed and encouraged by Mr. Pitt, and fearing the crown should be reduced to worse shifts rather than again bend to the yoke, they have submitted, and every thing promises fairer than could be expected. The Duke of Bedford, Grenville, and the two secretaries are already dismissed, and their places filled by Lord Winchelsea, Lord Rockingham and Mr. Dowdswell, as First Commissioners of the Admiralty; and Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Duke of Grafton and Mr. Conway. The list of *ins* and *outs* will be much more considerable by degrees, though not rapidly, nor executed with the merciless hand of late years, for the present system is composed of men as much more virtuous in that respect as in every other than their predecessors. Nobody has resigned yet but those immediately connected with the fallen, as Lord Gower, Lord Thomond,* and Lord Weymouth, and who would not have been suffered to stay if they had desired it.

The crown of Ireland is offered to Lord Hertford. All this sets my family in an illustrious light enough: yet it does not dazzle me. My wishes and intentions are just the same as they were. Moderation, privacy, and quiet, sum up all my future views; and having seen my friends landed, my little cock-boat shall waft me to Strawberry, as soon as I am able to get into it. The gout, they tell me, is to ensure me a length of years and health, but as I fear I must now and then renew the patent at the original expense, I am not much flattered by so dear an annuity. You may judge of my sensations when I tell you I reckon the greatest miracle ever performed was that of bidding the cripple take up his bed and walk—I could as soon do the former as the latter.

Since I began to write, I hear that this morning have kissed hands, Lord Ashburnham for the Great Wardrobe, in room of Lord Despencer, Lord Besborough and Lord Grantham Postmasters, in the places of Lord Hyde and Lord Trevor; Lord Villiers† as Vice-chamberlain, instead of old Will Finch, who I believe has a pension; and Lord Scarborough, who succeeds Lord Thomond in the Cofferer's office. You will say that all this is strongly tinctured with peerage—it is true, but the House of Commons will have its dole, though not yet, as folks do not like a re-election depending for six months.

* Percy Windham O'Brien, Earl of Thomond, brother of Lord Egremont and of Mrs. George Grenville.

† Only son of the Earl of Jersey.

The Duke of Bolton* the other morning—nobody knows why or wherefore, except that there is a good deal of madness in the blood, sat himself down upon the floor in his dressing-room, and shot himself through the head. What is more remarkable is, that it is the same house and same chamber in which Lord Scarborough† performed the same exploit. I do not believe that shooting one's self through the head is catching, or that any contagion lies in a wainscot that makes one pull a suicide-trigger, but very possibly the idea might revert and operate on the brain of a splenetic man. I am glad he had not a blue garter but a red one, as the more plenty the sooner one gets to Florence.

This is a long epistle, in my condition. Pray, unseal and decypher your lips now; the tower has no longer the least air of the Bastille: Halifax, Sandwich, and General Warrants are sent to the devil, though I believe Sandwich will contrive to return like Belphegor, even though he should be obliged to marry his own wife‡ again, but he can never get rid of the smell of brimstone. Adieu!

LETTER LXXII.

Arlington Street, July 30th, 1765.

I DID not think of writing to you to-day, my dear sir, both as I have very little to tell you, and as I am much fatigued with coming to town to-day from Strawberry Hill, where I have been these ten days, though with bad success, having had a severe return of my disorder, which I have as much superstitious aversion to name as the Romans had to pronounce the word Death. But let us talk of you, not me. Why, wherefore, or whence, the newspapers have taken it into their paper heads to recall you from Florence, I cannot tell. There never was a worse time for supposing so than when you are Mr. Conway's provincial. The instant I arrived and saw him, I named you first of all things. He stared, and had not even heard the report. However, I write, that an authentic contradiction may arrive at the same moment with the falsehood; and as I trust you have partiality enough to read my letter before the chronicle, (and indeed I have a title to such distinction, even as a senior gazette,) the moment the paragraph perks up its ears, you may give it the lie, and I wish you could give it to the person that invented it. Whoever he is, he will not soon be resident at Florence.

The changes go on leisurely, as I told you they would; and you must only believe in those who you see by the Gazette have kissed hands. The rest are like the removal of Sir Horace Mann; reported by the ambitious themselves, coined by the enemy, or invented to

* Charles Poulett, Duke of Bolton.
† Richard Lumley, Earl of Scarborough, shot himself in 1741.
‡ Lord Sandwich was parted from his wife, who was out of her senses.

amuse a public impatient of daily novelty. The new Opposition is as abusive as it was clamorous, rather rigorous against abuse; and having stabbed the Liberty of the press in a thousand places, they now write libels upon every rag of its old clothes.

Lord Hertford's arrival brought me to town, though so little fit to be moved. He came for only a few days, to make his option between Ireland and Paris. He takes the former, not very gladly, but to accommodate his brother and his nephew Grafton. This is a great blow to my long-meditated French journey. At present I am not able to undertake it, nor shall be probably for some time; yet go I think I must. Travelling is the best medicine to my shattered frame, and will be still more sovereign to my mind, that has been harassed and worn out with politics, and for which the successful event is by no means an adequate remedy. I built no castle in that prospect, nor like the soil a jot better than the view. My heart is set on retreat, and the decency of retiring so early charms me. I feel the sort of pleasure that I suppose Christian heroes did formerly in abstaining from their virgin brides and embracing the life of hermits. Stay, I am not going to turn anchoret. Perhaps my recess from politics is more like a divorce; it is to get rid of that scold the House of Commons.

Short as this letter is, consider it written by an invalid, and that I have even pain in my wrist while I am writing. I am carried to bed by two servants, and have not attempted to revive my walking these six days. Adieu?

LETTER LXXIII.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 12, 1765.

Mr. Conway, who came to dine with me here to-day with the Duke of Richmond, brought me your letter of the 27th of last month. I was a little disappointed to find you had not then received my history of the total change of administration in this country; much more vexed to hear that you have been suffering with the gout like me. I am, all the world will tell you, very ill-founded to preach on that text; but if I read lectures on chastity, and keep a mistress, yet I am not a Methodist, and may therefore with propriety say, for heaven's sake don't act like a madman. Dip your feet in cold water to prevent the gout! no, I never was quite so distracted. If it would prevent it, *à la bonne heure*; but all it can possibly do is to send it into your head or stomach, and you out of the world. The only thing I know of the gout is, that it is the only distemper in the world which insists upon curing itself. It is a monster and a mystery, and though I have felt so much of it lately, I have not even a guess at its nature left. I have fancied it wind or a conformation of the blood, or the Lord knows what;—in short, from minding not a word of what any body said about it, I am now grown not to mind even my own opinion. I have

tried hot medicines and cold, warmth and air, humouring it, and contradicting it; water, ice, wine, brandy, fruit; and have thought by turns that all of them did me good and did me hurt. I have had half-a-dozen returns, and sometimes been sick with Morello cherries, and sometimes with venison pasty. It is within two days of seven weeks that I have had this fit; it is but two days that I have been without pain, put on shoes, and crawled about the house; and at the end of all this torment, contrary to the doctrine of sages and nurses, I find my spirits and my stomach worse than they were a month ago; I don't mean my appetite, but the pain in my stomach, which by rule ought not to be there, my feet never having been free, and by another equally foolish rule that the gout cures every thing else; in short, I am very peevish, a mere shadow, and as old as a relic; still I don't dip my feet in cold water.

I immediately gave your letter to read to our Secretary of State. He says that Colonel Draper has the first promise of a red riband, and I remember well that Lord Clive's was torn from him. If I could not gainsay that, I lost all temper when he told me that Mitchel* was upon the ranks for another. I said that would be more cruel to you than any other competitor, Mitchel being in the same walk. In short, I made Mr. Conway vow his interest to you, and what little I have shall indubitably be employed for you. The impious shall come back again if this ministry does not serve you.

The impious will come back again, if assiduity and effrontery can effect it. Sandwich writes North Britons, that is, abusive libels, every day, and those gamblers call these ministers gamesters; but as the latter have not above a heel that is vulnerable, the former will hardly murder them by flinging mud. Yet pray don't think that I reckon their power immortal. *Tant s'en faut.* Norton is dismissed, and Mr. Yorke has been hesitating above a fortnight, but has at last yielded to be Attorney-General again. Lord Hertford goes to Ireland, and the Duke of Richmond to Paris. These, I think are all the last material changes. The Duke of Newcastle is busy in restoring clerks and tidewaiters, in offering every body every thing, and in patronising the clergy again; not being yet cured by their behaviour,† of loving to make bishops.

I have had a letter from Mr. Churchill who has been at Nancy: could you believe that Princess Craon, who by the way, went to Frankfort and Prague to see the election and coronation of the King of the Romans, is stepped to Vienna to put the Emperor in mind of her nephew, whom she wishes to have promoted in the army! Mr. Chute and I have been computing her age, and find her to be complete ninety, for Prince Craon, in the year 1746, owned that she was then seventy-one. 'Tis surely very wholesome to be a sovereign's mistress!‡ My neighbour and friend, Lady Suffolk,§ is little short of

* Resident at Berlin.

† The Duke of Newcastle had made very neatly the whole bench of Bishops; yet, when he resigned the Treasury, there was but one of them that waited on him.

‡ The Princess of Craon had been mistress to Leopold, Duke of Lorraine, father of the Emperor Francis.

§ Henrietta Hobart, Countess of Suffolk, mistress of George II.

fourscore, and except her hearing, which she lost early in her reign, has all her senses as perfect as ever; is clean, genteel, upright; and has her eyes, teeth, and memory, wonderful conservation, especially the last, which, unlike the aged, is as minutely retentive of what happened two years ago, as of the events of her youth.

We believe past all doubt that the Pretender's eldest son is turned Protestant, in earnest so; and in truth I think he could have no other reason now. What is more wonderful, and yet believed, is, that he came over and abjured in St. Martin's Church in London. Though he risked so much, what clergyman could suspect it was he? I asked if Johnson,* Bishop of Worcester, gave him absolution? He declares he will never marry, and his reason does him honour; that he may not leave England embroiled. What a strange conclusion of the House of Stuart, to end in a Protestant and a Cardinal. I am told that the latter, when the Duke of York was at Rome, said, "To be sure, the real King of England's situation was preferable to his brother's, but that he could not help thinking himself upon a better footing than the Duke of York." I heard a still better bon-mot yesterday *apropos* to the eldest brother. The Dowager Duchess of Aiguillon wore his picture in a bracelet, with the Saviour for the reverse. People could not find a reason for the connexion. Madame de Rochfort said, "Why, the same motto will suit both, 'Mon royaume n'est pas de ce monde.'" I pity the old phantom, if they have told him of his son's apostacy.

The Roman Church totters every where. The Benedictines at Paris have petitioned the Parliament for leave to lay aside their habit and rules, finding themselves ridiculous. The Cordeliers are ready to imitate them, but there is a little hitch; the Parliament asked shrewdly, what they proposed to do with their revenues, and I don't hear that they find *them* ridiculous; but the Parliament are not men to be stopped after they are invited. Monkery suppressed at its own desire! what miracle next?

I did not know your Duke of Parma, so I am only more sorry than I generally am for princes, as you tell me he was one of the best of the breed.

You received, I hope in time, my letter to contradict your recall. You must not believe a syllable you see in our papers. Their lies and blunders exceed of late even their usual ignorance. They have just bestowed a blue riband on Lord Hertford, who has had it so many years in the face of all London. Every red-book, every list of Parliament, could have set them right: yet every paper has copied it. If such a tale appeared in a country gazette, one should not wonder—but to be printed in the capital!

I shall be impatient to hear that your gout is going, like mine; and then I shall be impatient to make you a knight of the Bath. At least you have a good solicitor, though I cannot whip to Vienna against a promotion, as if I were but ninety. Adieu!

* Johnson, Bishop of Worcester, had been a Jacobite.

LETTER LXXIV.

Arlington Street, Aug. 27th, 1765.

I CAME to town last night, intending to lay your case more correctly before *our Secretary of State*,* but he did not arrive from the country himself till ten at night, and then found himself, by an absence of three days, so besieged with despatches, which he sat reading during the whole supper and afterwards, that I could not slip in a paragraph. However, this morning reading that Sir Charles Howard was dead, I immediately wrote a note to Mr. Conway to advertise him of another riband vacant, and to put in a caveat (as he is going to dine at Claremont) against the Duke of Newcastle promising it to some head of a college at Cambridge; and to-night I shall fully unfold your pretensions; but as the post will be gone before Mr. Conway comes home, I write this to show you how good a solicitor you have. I am in the more hurry to decorate you, as I am going directly to Paris; yea, I set out on the 9th of next month: after that date, direct to me thither, addressed to Mr. Foley, my banker.

Well! after twenty-three years of designs and irresolutions, I am actually leaving England! You will ask kindly whether almost every foreign thought in those years did not point beyond Paris? Oh! yes,—but, alas! think how ill I have been; not to mention that I am older too by twenty-three years. That space has made Alps and Apennines grow twenty times taller and more wrinkled and horrid! Oh! but you will say, you may come by sea—worse and worse—a sea voyage after the gout in one's head and stomach! I will tell you what; there is a man who has just invented what he calls *a marine belt;* you buckle it on, and walk upon the sea as you would upon a grass-plot. I never was an excellent walker, and my feet at present are piteously tender,—but I think a wave cannot hurt one,—perhaps I may step to you from Marseilles to Leghorn. I am conviced that the art of flying will be next reduced to practice;—oh! I shall certainly make you a visit on the first pair of wings that are to be sold. However, I had rather have made it before your new Austrian court arrives: I have a mortal aversion to any detachment from Vienna.

There is nothing new here, except that the whole town is in an uncertainty whether my Lord —— is dead or alive, whether he has had a fit or a bullet; and yet he is but yonder in Grosvenor-square. The neighbourhood say my lady called murder out of the window, and that immediately after, a pistol went off; the family now say nothing at all happened, but a fit,—and yet he does not appear. Thomas Graham, the apothecary, used on every occasion when you complained of any disorder, to reply with much solemnity, "Humph! it is very extraordinary, and yet it is very common." This curious phrase never happened to have common sense in it but on the sub-

* General Conway.

ject of self-murder, *which is very extraordinary and yet very common.*

Adieu! Perhaps I shall write to you again before Monday se'nnight—certainly, if I can have a star to send in my letter. The next after that will be from Paris.

LETTER LXXV.

Paris, Sept. 26th, 1765.

No poor mortal was ever so glad to return to his own country, as I was to quit mine. It is true this is pretty much the sum total of my satisfaction. I am very well received here, like much some that I knew before I arrived, and some I am acquainted with since; have sights to see, and baubles to buy, two considerable occupations of my life; but I am not young enough to be enchanted with any thing new: still less of an age to form friendships, when one has proved how rarely the thing exists at all. But I am unchained from politics, and have no longer any body's follies to answer for, or care for, but my own.

I did not receive your last till I came hither, and it was then too late, when your new grand duke was on the road, to mention to Mr. Conway what you hint at, an increase of character. In truth, my object for you is always of a more solid nature; I had rather your appointments were increased than your dignity. At present, too, a new solicitation might interfere with the riband, which I think would cast more lustre on you than a step of office. My interest is not great enough to obtain all I should wish for you, if it can obtain any thing; and I doubt, the measure of leaving what are called *all my friends*, will not add to my credit. It must have been you, and almost only you, for whom I would have asked any thing. The fewer obligations I have, the less right has any body to tax my attendance. I want to dissolve most of my connexions, not to increase them, and to break off with a world, of which I am heartily tired as to any thing serious.

Lady Hertford is gone, and the Duke of Richmond not come; consequently I am as *isolé* as I can wish to be. There are three or four houses whither I go when I will, but you may believe that it is not constant. Their histories are unknown to me, and uninteresting. Their politics most indifferent; their fashionable literature, and more fashionable irreligion, subjects of which I am tired. I neither love to dispute nor discuss. In short, nothing interests me but a few points on which I do not care to think, much less to talk with indifferent persons. I am Methuselah on most things, and a boy on others, and one don't love to tell people that one's passions are too superannuated or too juvenile; that one is past caring for what they like, and still too attached to some sentiments of one's own. When

the *monde* returns to Paris, I shall probably be more dissipated, but I am not discontented with my present nonchalance.

Prince Beauvau* is at Bordeaux, and is likely to stay some time. I saw his daughter the other night at Madame de Mirepoix's, who is like what he was, but it is not delicate enough for a girl. Here is a Dr. Gatti, a disciple of Cocchi, who speaks of you with great regard, and desired me to mention him. I was pleased the other night at the Italian comedy to find I had lost so little of my Italian as to understand it better than the French scenes.

Though the fashionable turn is serious, yet it is still fashion that rules. The Count de St. Florentin, Secretary of State, has had his hand cut off on the bursting of his gun: they had talked of it two days and were tired. Somebody asked how he did? "Bon!" replied one of the company, "on n'en parle plus." He was not out of danger, but it was an old story.

The dauphin is in a very bad way, and not likely to live. Of English History I know not a syllable. I conclude there is nothing to know. The shooting season is begun, and we have our fashions too. I suppose of politics *on ne parle plus.* I expect some *tapage* from the residence of the Prince and Princess of Brunswick at St. James's. Her Royal Highness is of a lively imagination, and he did not leave England in a style that promised sudden cordiality.

They question me much here, why Mr. Pitt did not accept the administration? Truly it would be difficult for me to explain to them what I do not understand myself! *Monsieur de Temple* is still more inexplicable. I do not give myself much trouble to inform them; and I hear with great tranquillity *que c'étoit un très bon homme que ce Milord Bath.*† However, I could not conceive that they knew so very little of a country which has lately been so much in vogue with them. A very sensible woman‡ knew more of the matter, when she said to me last night, "Vous avez eu un moment bien brillant, mais vous étes tombé!" Yes, in good truth.

Write to me, addressed to Monsieur Foley, banquier, *à* Paris, and tell me of your new Court.§ I hope you, like me and the vulgar, expect marvels at first from a young sovereign.—I remember, and laugh at myself.

Adieu! This is a dull letter enough. I know no events, and you will not expect me to write Travels, like Misson, or to fall in love, like Polnitz,‖ with all the princes and princesses of the earth. My spirits would serve if they found proper food, but I believe they will lie pretty fallow for the rest of my life. When one has a singular

* Son of the Prince de Craon. His only child by his first wife married the Prince de Poix, son of the Comte de Noailles. His second wife was a widow, Madame de Clermont, sister of the Comte de Chabot, by whom he had no children.

† Lord Bath at the end of his life had been at Paris.

‡ The celebrated Madame Geoffrin.

§ The Archduke Leopold, brother of the Emperor Joseph II., was Great Duke of Tuscany, and married a Princess of Spain.

‖ Baron Polnitz wrote accounts of several European Courts.

turn of mind, and not *liant* with a new world, one grows unintelligible but to the few contemporaries that rest about one. My mind has taken in its quantum of feelings. I shall live upon the old stock; and, I doubt, be very insipid both to myself and others. Adieu!

September 30th.

P.S. Sir James Macdonald is going from hence to Florence, and has desired me to give him a recommendation to you. He is a particular friend of Lord Beauchamp,* and a very extraordinary young man for variety of learning. He is rather too wise for his age, and too fond of showing it, but when he has seen more of the world, he will choose to know less.

Lord Beauchamp passed through here to-day, and stopped for only four hours. He spoke of you in raptures.

LETTER LXXVI.

Paris, October 16, 1765.

I AM stocked with your letters, my dear sir, and have nothing to say in answer. Two *pacquets* have been sent back to me from England, dated before a third, that I received here and answered. I am impatient to know that you have got it, for the Chevalier de Lorenzi† has put it into my head, though in truth his own is none of the clearest, that it should have been franked to Genoa, there being a rupture somewhere between postmasters of different territories. I shall take care to be better informed before this departs.

If you have received mine, as I hope, you will have seen that I had left England before I knew of your schemes, and consequently when it was too late to assist them. If the deposite of solicitation for you that I left before I set out has no weight, my word from hence will certainly have none, where they do not like I should be; nor truly can I with much grace ask favours when I will grant none. You have been an exception, because I neither know how to refuse you, or to resist attempting to serve you; but having burst from all political connexions, my wish is, not to be drawn back by any ties. If there is any regard left for me, you will be served, because nothing could be more strongly pressed on my side. I shall be sorry, but shall not wonder, if I am forgotten.

Your new court will, I hope, amuse you, and not ruin you. A friend, as it is called, but, as I think, the worst of foes, has stepped in to save me from ruin here. In short, I caught cold ten days after my arrival, have had a relapse, and am laid up with the gout in both feet. It is vexatious enough, besides the pain, which is no flea-bite.

* Francis Seymour Conway, eldest son of the Earl of Hertford.
† Brother of Comte Lorenzi, the French Minister at Florence.

It prevents my seeing both things and people, except in my own room, which is seldom the place where I wish to see them. *Basta!* This world was made for Cæsar! that is, the healthy and the bustling. Unpleasant as it is to be ill any where but at home, the rooted aversion I have taken to politics and the House of Commons, will brave even the gout, which shall not carry me back. When I do return, which at soonest I think will be in February, I shall still wear the gout's livery, and live retired from all other connexions. What little I learn here, when the scene opens, shall be transmitted to you, but I have made few arrangements of curiosity.

Adieu! my dear sir. The life of a bed-chamber in a *hôtel garni*, and in a foreign country, and when the court is at Fontainbleau, can furnish little matter for a letter. The dauphin is said to mend with the change of air and ass's milk, and the journey which was to have been shortened, is again protracted to the 18th of next month.

LETTER LXXVII.

Paris, Nov. 2nd, 1765.

You cannot be more distressed than I am at your not receiving my letters. This is the third I have written since I came hither. The first of them was dated on the 30th of September. Then the Chevalier de Lorenzi told me there was some dispute between the French and Italian postmasters, and offered to convey one for me to his brother. I gave him one on the 19th of October, and had no doubt but you would receive that. I now scarce know what to do, unless Mr. Foley will engage to find some safer way. It embarrasses me the more, because, while I fear the miscarriage of my letters, I can scarce even give you hints of what I do not care to explain at all by writing. Had you received my others, I think you would have understood me. The sum of what I have said in them, and all I can say in this, is, that, but to serve *you*, nothing could have made me solicit at all, and you are much deceived if you think my interest worth a farthing. I pressed the affair of your riband with all the vehemence I could before I left England; I have renewed my application since I came hither; and even three days ago, on receiving your last letter but one, I wrote in behalf of an increase of character for you. I own it was not pleasant to do, nor do I flatter myself that any regard will be paid to my suit. In short, I have left what were called my friends, have done with them, have refused to return to their Parliament—can I reasonably ask or expect favours from them?

I had long determined before the change happened, for very good reasons, to withdraw from party and politics the moment I should find an opportunity. Chance and *my friends* gave it me; I seized it; and

though I was their slave while they were out of place, I will not be so now they are in, nor will be ordered to come and go just as they want me. Think then, my dear sir, on what interest you build when you call on mine! And do allow me some merit when you are the single exception to the resolution I had taken of asking no more favours of this Administration* than I did of the last. I think I shall write once more on what you tell me of Viviani; more to satisfy you and my own conscience, than from forming any views of success. You must look on me for the future as a man who has totally done with the world, but for my amusement. I know it, my dear sir, I know it; I laugh at it; I divert myself with it; it does not make me cross. I find all men are like all men; and how can one be angry with every body? I used to quarrel with those that deceived me; I now only grow very civil to them; know what they are worth; don't trust them, nor care about them, but in common things behave to them as I used to do. One man is ungrateful because he is a rogue; another, because he is a man of virtue: very well—the effect is the very same: if he is the first, perhaps he is agreeable; if the second, probably disagreeable. Why seek out two others, when, perhaps, another rogue will not please me so much, and another piece of uprightness will be as unpleasant?

This is my system, and I go on pretty much as I did. My spirits are as good as ever; I wish my health was so. Since I came hither I have had a relapse, and another fit of the gout for a month. I now limp abroad again, but my eyes have lost many a sight, and all the fine weather. The only thing that provokes me, is to be told that the gout cures every other distemper. I never had any other distemper; and I am sure it takes a long time to cure itself—*à la charge de revenir.* When I return to England, which will be in February or March, according as the weather is fine or not, I shall concentre my few remaining joys in Strawberry, and still be happy enough if I recover my limbs. I wish you had a Strawberry, that you might look down on *grandeurs*, and mortifications of *grandeurs* with the same indifference that I do. When men have paid court to kings and ministers for years, Count Lorenzi shows you what their reward is. The world talks of serving them *faithfully*—for what or why? What do I owe to any human creature more than he owes to me? What entitles him to my *fidelity?* Can those foolish words *king* and *subject* make him better than me, or me worse than him! He pays me, and I do his business—is there any other relation between him and me? In all probability he is more foolish, ignorant, vain, and selfish than I am: do those qualities entitle him to my esteem or respect, much more to any duty from me? And can the frowns of such a strutting phantom mortify one? If he deprives me of my employment without any reason, he deserves my hatred; if he refuses me what I have just pretensions to, he is insensible to merit,

* Mr. Walpole had a good opinion of Lord Rockingham as an honest man, but thought him very unfit for First Minister; and, therefore, as he paid no court to him, had not much hopes of the red riband for Sir Horace Mann, which could not be obtained without Lord Rockingham's consent; but general Conway (with whom and the Duke of Richmond he only preserved any connexion) did obtain it.

and, consequently, worthless himself. I should be glad to see if that would mortify me! A King is established for my convenience, that is for the convenience of every body; his power and his riches are his wages. His ministers are placed about him, because this mighty thing is a helpless poor mortal, like other mortals, and cannot do a thousandth part of its own business. His ministers have under-officers for exactly the same reasons. What a respectable fabric! Laugh at them, my dear sir, or pity them, if they try to do as much as they can; but, as that is seldom the case, never be mortified if they disappoint you. The *Nousvoulons** ladies may be vexed if they do not dine with a princess they never saw before. It would be a comfort to me, who think the kingdom of one's own room sufficient dignity for any reasonable man. I wish my philosophy, such as it is, may have any weight with you. I doubt it is the only service I can do for you, but it will be a great one if it has effect: it will tranquillise your mind; and I know nothing else worth seeking. Adieu!

LETTER LXXVIII.

Paris, Nov. 13th, 1765.

I RECEIVE your letter by Lord Cowper's courier this instant, and had another yesterday. I have certainly received all you have written to me, and am glad to find you begin to get mine. This is the fourth from Paris. I wish, without farther discussions, that you would conceive how very little interest I have, because I fear you will feel it at last; and the disappointment will be the greater. I have written again in your favour, which is more than I promised; but, when I tell you, that I have not had a single word of answer to all I have said from hence about you, sure you will be convinced, my dear sir, that my credit is poor indeed.

15th.

If your Earl† acted from reason, I should think him in the right not to go to England yet. The indecency of his stay while his father was still alive, and so pressing to see him, can only be palliated by remaining, which would look as if it was the strength of his attachment that had detained him, and not disrespect; but it is no business of mine.

You will have heard of the death of the Duke of Cumberland,

* The Great Duchess had made a distinction between the old and new nobility, by a declaration, which beginning *Nous voulons*, the latter were nicknamed *the Nousvoulons Ladies.*

† The third Earl Cowper, who had gone to travel in his father's life, fell in love at Florence with a married lady, and could not be prevailed on by the most earnest entreaties of his dying father to come to England. He continued there for many years after the death of his father and the extinction of his own passion; married an English young gentlewoman there, and in the year 1781 sent his children by her to England without coming himself.

which has awakened much anxiety in England, and given a glimpse of changes. The King has assured the present ministers that this event shall make no alteration, and you may be sure they are desirous of believing so. The opinions of the Opposition are divided, of whom some think the rivet that held them together is gone; others that it will strengthen them, as some who hated only the Duke will now be ready to accede. I am of neither opinion: a forced connexion between a nephew and uncle who had so long hated one another was no real cement: they met in a centre of hatred to the late ministers; while that subsists, the duke's life or death was indifferent. On the other hand, if any are disposed to take on now, I should think they were ready to do so before: political hatred is not so predominant in these times as political interest. It may, upon the whole, give an opening to some broader system, from the very circumstance, and perhaps, from that alone, that it occasions such an arrangement to be talked of; but I imagine that the groundwork will remain pretty much as it is.

There seems to be a rot among princes; the Emperor Don Philip and the duke are dead: Prince Frederick, our King's youngest brother, is in the last stage of consumption; and here we every moment expect the dauphin's death. He received extreme unction two days ago; the *prières des quarante heures* have been mumbled over; for here they still die in ceremony, though few pretend to more than acting that farce; few to so much as that. He himself is to be pitied, and they say expressed his sense of his fate; to die at thirty-six, Dauphin of France, "sans avoir joui, ni fait de bien à personne" —if he would have felt the last, he is a real loss.

15th, at night.

I am just come from the Duke of Richmond's, whose audience had been postponed on the dauphin's danger. He has received a courier this evening, that appoints him to be at Fontainbleau the day after to-morrow, the dauphin being what is called better. We thought him dead, for all post-horses are stopped, and nobody suffered to come from Fontainbleau, as the Court may want to remove at a minute's warning. Paris in the meantime is a solitude, and *triste*; but gay enough for me, who but just begin to go about again. The English, who are here in droves, do not take these royal deaths much to heart; the Duke of Beaufort made a ball two nights ago in the hotel where I lodge, at which we were no fewer than forty-eight. I was forced to go in my own defence, and to stay as late as I could, as I had no chance of getting a wink of sleep but by being worn out: my plan succeeded. In truth, as I stay here only to avoid being in England, it is pretty indifferent to me how I pass my time. When I have broken from politics, and shown that I have, I shall return to my *château*, and quiet.

Colonel Barré arrived last night, but had sent a refusal before him to England of the place of Irish Vice-Treasurer. I dined where he did to-day, and thought he was not quite so determined as he had im-

agined. I never was in a room with him before; his style is vulgar; but that did not surprise me. Wilkes is here too; in the same tone and with less parts. One likes to see men that posterity will wish to have seen: bate that curiosity, and they are commonly not just the men you would wish to see much. Wilkes's day is over; Barré's, I think, to come.

How I wish, my dear sir, that your new court may enliven your life, and not be the cause of any mortification in it! That it may be is the case of courts, that fill up the succession of time, and add nothing to ennoble it. When one thinks over the number of courts that are, and have been, of how many intrigues and vexations they have been the source, and how little they deserve, or have deserved, past, present, or future esteem, can one help lumping them together, and then dropping the thought of them with contempt? I consider the multitudes to whom they are important, as so many old Brantômes, who admired and recorded every proud lord and every lewd lady to whom he had bowed in the guard-room. Laugh at them, and you will be happy.

P.S. I trouble you to forward the enclosed to Hamilton,* and direct it.

My Lady Orford has lost another husband.† Will she try a third? or will a third trust her?

The King, who had promised it, has confirmed the assurance of the Garter to Lord Albemarle,‡ on the duke's death. It is a handsome compliment to his uncle's memory. There will be some struggle for the other two ribands. It don't care about them; I am only interested about the red for you.

LETTER LXXIX.

Paris, Nov. 30th, 1765.

Allelujah! Monsieur l'Envoyé! I was going to direct to you by this title; but if your credentials are not arrived, as I hope they are not, that I may be the first to notify your new dignity to you, I did not know how your new court would take it, and therefore I postpone your surprise, till you have opened my letter—if it loiters on the road like its predecessors, I shall be out of all patience. In short; my last express tells me that the King will name you Envoy in your new credentials. You must judge of the pleasure it gives me to have obtained this for you, my dear sir, by the vexation I expressed on thinking I could not effect it. All answer, I suppose, to my solicitations was deferred, till I could be told they had succeeded.

* Resident at Naples.

† Sewallis Shirley, second husband of Lady Orford.

‡ George Keppel, third Earl of Albemarle, one of the Lords of the Bed-chamber, and favourite of William Duke of Cumberland.

You must forget or erase most of what I had said to you lately, for when I can serve my friends I am content. Your letters had been so many, and so earnest, and I so little expected any good from my intercession, that I was warmer than I wish I had been; and the more, as I see I was in part unjust. I doubted every body but Mr. Conway, and did not think that he alone had power to do what I desired, and could not bear you should think I neglected what I wished so much, pleasing you. I have done it to my great satisfaction, since it is what you had so much at heart,—but remember, I don't retract my sermon. I think exactly as I did, that one is in the wrong to place one's peace of mind on courts and honours: their joys are most momentary, violently overbalanced by disappointments, and empty in possession. I shall not excuse you if you have more of these solicitudes; but I will rejoice with you over this one triumph, of which I will do you the justice to believe I am more glad than you are. You must thank Mr. Conway, by whom I obtained it, as if you owed it all to him. You know I hate to be talked of for these things, and therefore insist that my name be not mentioned to him or any body but your brother. It will be the last favour I shall ever ask; my constant plan has been to be nobody, and for the rest of my days I shall be more nobody than ever. You must gratify me with this silence. I did not think it would be necessary, or I should have made it a condition, for I have declared so much that I would meddle with nothing, that it would contradict those declarations, and disoblige some, for whom I have refused to interest myself.

As I grow better, I am more reconciled to this country: yet I shall return home in the spring. Apprehensions of the gout make one as old as the gout itself, and cure one of all prospects. I must resign that pleasing one, so long entertained, of seeing you at Florence. Your new establishment forbids my expecting you in England. Had I consulted my own wishes I should have let you have been cross and come home. Happily I am not so selfish. I have learnt, too, not to build on pleasures; they are not of my age. I must go and grow old, and bear ennui; must try to make comforts a recompense for living in a country where I do not love the people. My great spirits think all this a difficult task; but spirits themselves are useless, when one has not the same people to laugh with one as formerly. I have no joy in new acquaintance, because I can have no confidence in them. Experience and time draw a line between older persons and younger, which is never to be passed with satisfaction; and though the whole bent of my mind was formed for youth, fortunately I know the ridicule of letting it last too long, and had rather act a part unnatural to me, than a foolish one. I don't love acting a part at all—if I grow very tired of it I will return hither, and vary the scene; this country is more favourable to latter age than England, and what a foreigner does is of no consequence any where. Adieu; my dear Envoy! My letters lately seem very grave, but analyze them, you will find them very foolish.

December 1st.

I received your letter of the 14th. Upon my word our correspondence marches sedately! What do they do with our letters? They are not grown more important than they used to be. Good postmasters, secretaries of state, or whoever you are, seal this letter again quickly, and send it on. You shall detain my next as long as you please. If your curiosity is not satisfied with reading the trifles I have written to Sir Horace for four-and-twenty years, I have nothing to say: you do me too much honour, and I hope you will be repaid by four-and-twenty years more (I mean if Sir Horace and I don't meet sooner,) I promise you I will continue writing to him—for your satisfaction. Well, my dear sir, you are Envoy, and I hope will be delighted with all these Austrian etiquettes and ceremonies—I should be sick enough of them to send back my credentials unopened. You have enjoyed all the benefits hitherto of a court life, without a court; sure the husk was preferable to the kernel.

LETTER LXXX.

Paris, January 5th, 1766.

The post, my dear sir, is as vexatious as possible, and denies me favours that even a ministry grants. I had set my heart on being the first to announce your Envoyship to you. Lord Cowper's servant, I find, used me as ill as if he were a postmaster too, slipping through Paris with Mr. Conway's letter, without calling on me, and giving me the chance of your opening mine first. Well! all this is very selfish, and I ought to be content with your having it, and knowing it any how.

For the riband I know not what to say, as I have not heard a syllable about it. Favours generally beget favours, for courts and fortune love faces they are used to. I will not answer in your case. It would be cheapest to me to persuade you not to care; but I see you make a sad pupil for a philosopher. I am at least so much of a philosopher, that I could never solicit a plaything for you with the same earnestness that I begged a reality. Partly you know my reasons for not caring to ask at all. Out of friendship to you, my dear sir, I broke through all my resolutions; but without entering into them farther, ask yourself if it can be easy for me, in any light, to sue for favours, when I have even left my country, my friends, and a triumphant party, to break abruptly from all political connexions? As you seemed to value the red riband, I did press for it for you with more warmth than I thought such nonsense deserved. Consider, I was behind the scenes when my father revived that pageant; I knew it was a succedaneum to Bank bills, and I was asto-

nished when my brother* accepted it, even after it had fallen much below par. If I have any credit remaining in the Bank, it will operate in your favour; that is, if any friend you have made abroad, would renew the application, the memory of my request perhaps would second it. What think you of Tommy Pelham?† He used to profess much to you.

I called the ministry triumphant: they are so beyond their warmest expectation. In the House of Lords, which the Opposition had chosen as the field of certain victory, the Ministers were fourscore to twenty-four. In the Commons the defeat was still more disgraceful. George Grenville, who on the first day opposed the address, was forced to retract, and it passed without a negative. On the fourth and last of that brief session, though he had managed a surprise, and though there was not a minister in the House, their re-elections not being over, he was beaten by seventy to thirty-five; a victory without generals! In short, no disgraced ministers ever fell so low and so totally as the present.

Venal and false as Parliaments are, and no Parliament ever exceeded the present in both respects, it would not account for this total abandonment of the late ministers, if universal odium did not concur. Much good may it do the Parliament, which supported them so roundly but last year! The whole party is shrunk to the Bedford faction, for Lord Temple, who has joined his brother George, seems to have carried nothing with him but the contempt of the nation. Mr. Pitt, as Milton says of the moon, remains *in clouded majesty* aloof; is said to favour the Ministry, and is certainly hostile to the Opposition. This is the summary of English politics. When the House meets on the 14th, I do not imagine the Ministers will be less strong than before the holidays; for the thinness of both Houses indicates how many were waiting the event; and they, good folks, will hardly resort into a beaten camp. Teazed no doubt the Ministers will be, for Lord Temple cannot refrain from mischief, or Sandwich from tricks; and Grenville, rather than not talk, would harangue, if there were not one man in the house on his side. To silence him would require an Algerine ministry, who would begin by cutting out his tongue.

The King's youngest brother, Prince Frederick, is dead, of a dropsy and consumption: he was a pretty and promising boy. The vacant garters are given to the Prince of Wales, the hereditary prince, and Lord Albemarle. The numbers of the royal family and of foreign princes connected with them who have the garter, will make it an extraordinary curiosity on an English breast. If you obtain the red, pray don't think of exchanging it for the blue. To be serious, let your new credentials arrive and be fixed Envoy. Mitchell, I see,

* Sir Edward, second son of Sir Robert Walpole, was made knight of the Bath after his father's death. Robert, the eldest, received the red riband along with his father at the restitution of the order in 1725.

† Thomas, afterwards created Lord Pelham.

has got one red riband; and Draper I suppose will have the other. On a new vacancy you may get the Duke of York to renew his application for you. As he will not probably obtain many favours, they may now and then be willing to hush him with a red riband for a friend, and he will like that you should owe it to him rather than to a private person. When you are firm in your seat of Envoy, what if you wrote to his Royal Highness, that you would not trouble him on the Envoy, but hoped to be indebted to his protection for what he had so graciously engaged to undertake. This I should think would pique him, if he sees the Bath bestowed contrary to his solicitation. Consider this advice, and act as you find it reasonable or not. You are a very boy, but I cannot help humouring you a little. Good night.

P.S. I guessed right; the papers which are just come in, say that Draper* has the red riband.

LETTER LXXXI.

Paris, February 9th, 1766.

I CONGRATULATE the success of your labours† as a minister, though as an Englishman I am very indifferent about the matter. It is below such a nation as England to trouble its head whether an old mumper at Rome calls a wretched fugitive *Rè d'Inghiterra* or *Principe di Galles*. For the poor lad's followers it is important, and any thing is lucky for them that prevents their going to Tyburn for him. To himself, indeed, it is cruel to be refused an empty title by an old Dervish for whom he lost the reality. Rome is the only spot on earth where he can exist decently, as at least he would take the *pas* of many saints. To call him Prince of Wales, and refuse him the kingship, is an absurdity worthy of an Irish patriarch. *Here* they assign many reasons for the refusal, as the jealousy of those fools the Roman nobility; apprehensions that the English would not go to Rome; as if they had never gone there in the father's time! tenderness to the Catholics in England, who are actually disturbed there by the Bishop of London, which they were not in the old Pretender's time, who was acknowledged; other fears, from the rashness and drunkenness of the young man's character; doubts on his faith, the best reason of all; and suspicions (the worst reason of all) that we have bribed the congregation of cardinals. I should be very indignant at the latter reason; but the rapacity of English members of Parliament re-assures me.

* Sir William Draper, much known by his conquest of Manilla; by his controversy with the author of the Letters of Junius; and by his accusation of General Murray on the second loss of Minorca in 1782.

† This relates to Sir Horace Mann's having, by order of his court, interposed to prevent the Pope from acknowledging the eldest son of the late Chevalier de St. George as King of England.

There are rumours here of a coolness, even of quarrels, between this court and the new Emperor, who it is said insists that Parma should be held as a fief of the empire, and demands restitution of Lorraine. It would not surprise me: France, as England has done, will find that the court of Vienna obeys no law, observes no tie, but that of pride. As England and France are the two powers that can hurt one another the most, I wish them for ever connected. If this young German Cæsar begins already, I know where he will end—at impatience to reign over his mother's estates.

We are every day impatient for letters from England, where Mr. Pitt's conduct has occasioned great confusion. He has declared a little for some part of the administration, but strongly against the Duke of Newcastle; violently against Lord Bute; peremptorily against the last ministry, every one of whose acts he condemns; and what is stronger than all, against the Parliament itself, which he says has taxed America without a right to do so, and by that act broke the original compact. His followers are exceedingly few; yet his name makes a sort of party, and you may be sure he has all the Americans with him. Lord Bute acts separately, as a fourth party—*if* he is allowed to do so, what becomes of the faith pledged to the present ministers, when they were invited and entreated to take the lead? *If* he should join the late opposition, and they join him, how that bargain will complete the scandalous characters of both sides!—of their's to stoop to him again; of his who brings back, from self-interest, to his master those who stigmatised the mother by Act of Parliament! How justly he will deserve the title he assumes, of the *King's friend!* and who will not recollect the North Briton, number 45?

Your old friend, Lord Fane,* is dead, and has left three thousand pounds a-year to poor Lady Sandwich,† who cannot enjoy it. She is shut up: the family blood and her misfortunes have turned her head. I do not doubt but Sandwich will find means to profit by her unhappy situation.

We are again up to the ears in snow, yet I am robust and well, am become *très* French, never dine, but sup, sit up all night, and lie abed all day. In short, heartily enjoy the holidays I have given myself from Parliament. However, I think of returning home at the end of March, but have some suspicion that I shall now and then steal a winter here.

If my philosophy about the red riband does not convince you, at least you must not wonder that your want of philosophy does not persuade me; though, if it were in my power to bestow, I should certainly humour you with it. Your victorious campaign against the House of Stuart adds a new title to your pretensions. If a change should happen in England, I do not think that you would obtain it, after being in favour with the present ministers. The present reign cannot but be stormy, while there is a favourite, who is too notorious

* Charles, Viscount Fane: he had been minister at Florence before Sir Horace Mann.

† Lady Sandwich was second sister of Lord Fane.

a coward to venture his person, too ambitious and too treacherous to suffer any body long who will not be his creatures. Should George Grenville return to power, I should at least be comforted to see equal ambition, equal pride, and equal treachery, bow to an idol he has abandoned, despised, and insulted. Adieu!

LETTER LXXXII.

Paris, Feb. 29, 1766.

I HAVE received your letters very regularly, and though I have not sent you nearly so many, yet I have not been wanting to our correspondence, when I have had any thing particular to say, or knew what to say. The Duke of Richmond has been gone to England this fortnight; he had a great deal of business, besides engagements here; and if he has failed writing, at least I believe he received yours. Mr. Conway, I suppose, has received them too, but not to my knowledge; for I have received but one from him this age. He has had something else to do than to think of Pretenders, and pretenders to pretensions. It has been a question (and a question scarcely decided yet) not only whether he and his friends should remain ministers, but whether we should not draw the sword on our colonies, and provoke them and the manufacturers at home to rebellion. The goodness of Providence, or fortune by its permission, has interposed, and I hope prevented blood; though George Grenville and the Duke of Bedford, who so mercifully checked our victories, in compassion to France, grew heroes the moment there was an opportunity of conquering our own brethren. It was actually moved by them and their banditti to send troops to America. The stout Earl of Bute, who is never afraid when not personally in danger, joined his troops to his ancient friends, late foes, and now new allies. Yet this second race of Spaniards, so fond of gold and thirsting after American blood, were routed by 274; their whole force amounting but to 134. The Earl astonished at this defeat, had recourse to that kind of policy which Machiavel recommends in his chapter of *back stairs*. Cæsar himself disavowed his ministers, and declared he had not been for the repeal, and that his servants had used his name without his permission. A paper was produced to his eyes which proved this denial an equivocation. The Ministers, instead of tossing their places into the middle of the closet, as I should have done, had the courage and virtue to stand firm, and save both Europe and America from destruction.

At that instant, who do you think presented himself as Lord Bute's guardian angel? only one of his bitterest enemies: a milk-white angel, white even to his eyes and eye-lashes, very purblind, and whose tongue runs like a fiddle-stick. You have seen this divinity, and have prayed to it for a riband. Well this god of love became the god of politics, and contrived meetings between Bute, Grenville, and

Bedford; but, what happen to highwaymen *after* a robbery, happened to them *before* they quarrelled about the division of the plunder, before they had made the capture—and thus, when the last letters came away, the repeal was likely to pass in both houses, and tyranny once more despairs.

This is the quintessence of the present situation in England. To how many North Britons, No. 45, will that wretched Scot furnish matter? But let us talk of your *Cardinal-Duke of York;* so his folly has left his brother in a worse situation than he took him up! *York* seems a title fated to sit on silly heads—or don't let us talk of him: he is not worth it.

I am as sorry for the death of Lady Hilsborough,* as I suppose Mr. Skreene is glad of his consort's departure. She was a common creature, bestowed on the public by Lord Sandwich. Lady Hilsborough had sense and merit, and is a great loss to her family. By letters hither, we hear miserable accounts of poor Sir James Macdonald; pray let him know that I have written to him, and how much I am concerned for his situation.

This Court is plunged into another deep mourning for the death of old Stanislaus, who fell into the fire; it caught his night-gown and burnt him terribly before he got assistance. His subjects are in despair, for he was a model of goodness and humanity; uniting or rather creating, generosity from economy. The poles had not the sense to re-elect him, after his virtues were proved, they who had chosen him before they knew him. I am told such was the old man's affection for his country, and persuasion that he ought to do all the good he could, that he would have gone to Poland if they had offered him the crown. He has left six hundred thousand livres, and a *rente viagere* of forty thousand crowns to the Queen, saved from the sale of his Polish estates, from his pension of two millions, and from his own liberality. His buildings, his employment of the poor, his magnificence, and his economy, were constant topics of admiration. Not only the court-tables were regularly and nobly served, but he treated and defrayed his old enemy's† grand-daughter, the princess Christina, on her journey hither to see her sister the dauphiness. When mesdames his grand-daughters made him an unexpected visit, he was so disturbed for fear it should derange his finances, which he thought were not in advance, that he shut himself up for an hour with his treasurer, to find his resources; was charmed to know he should not run in debt, and entertained them magnificently. His end was calm and gay, like his life, though he suffered terribly, and he said so extraordinary a life could not finish in a common way. To a lady who had set her ruffle on fire, and scorched her arm about the same time, he said, "Madame, nous brulons du même feu." The poor Queen had sent him the very night-gown that occasoned his death:

* Lady Mary Fitzgerald, daughter of the Earl of Kildare, and first wife of Wills Hill, first Earl of Hilsborough.

† Augustus II., Elector of Saxony and King of Poland.

he wrote to her, "C'étoit pour me tenir chaud, mais il m'a tenu trop chaud."

Yesterday we had the funeral oration on the dauphin; and are soon to have one on Stanislaus. It is a noble subject; but if I had leisure, I would compose a grand funeral oration on the number of princes dead within these six months. What fine pictures, contrasts, and comparisons they would furnish! The Duke of Parma and the King of Denmark reigning virtuously with absolute power! The Emperor at the head of Europe, and encompassed with mimic Roman eagles, tied to the apron-strings of a bigoted and jealous virago. The dauphin cultivating virtues under the shade of so bright a crown, and shining only at the moment that he was snatched from the prospect of empire. The old Pretender wasting away in obscurity and misfortune, after surviving the Duke of Cumberland, who had given the last blow to the hopes of his family; and Stanislaus perishing by an accident,—he who had swam over the billows raised by Peter the Great and Charles XII., and reigning, while his successor and second of his name was reigning on his throne. It is not taking from the funeral part to add, that when so many good princes die, the Czarina is still living!

The public again thinks itself on the eve of a war, by the recall of Stahremberg, the imperial minister. It seems at least to destroy the expectation of a match between the youngest arch-duchess and the dauphin, which it was thought Stahremberg remained here to bring about. I like your Great Duke for feeling the loss of his minister. It is seldom that a young sovereign misses a governor before he tastes the fruits of his own incapacity.

March 1st.

We have got more letters from England, where the ministers are still triumphant. They had a majority of 108 on the day that it was voted to bring in a bill to repeal the stamp-act. George Grenville's ignorance and blunders were displayed to his face and to the whole world; he was hissed through the Court of Requests, where Mr. Conway was huzza'd. It went still farther for Mr. Pitt, whom the mob accompanied home with "Io Pitts!" This is new for an opposition to be so unpopular. Adieu!

LETTER LXXXIII.

Paris, March 21st, 1766.

You are not very just to me, my dear sir, in suspecting me of neglecting you. Do you think Paris has turned my head, or could make me, what England never could, forget you? Was not it so when I first arrived here? and did not you find at last that it was the post's fault, not mine? I shall be in London by the middle of April, and then

I trust our correspondences will have no more interruptions: but sure you ought to distrust any thing sooner than a friendship so unalterable as mine.

We do not yet actually know the last step of the repeal of the stamp-act, but have all reason to conclude that it passed in the most satisfactory manner for the ministry, as, on the second reading in the House of Lords, it was carried by a majority of 34, though no greater majority was expected than of five or six. The blood-thirsty protested, and intended to protest again on the last stage; an evident symptom of their despair; and a most foolish step, as it is marking out their names to the odium of the nation, and delivering down an attestation of their tyrannic principles to posterity. Lord Lyttelton drew the first, and I hope it will be bound up hereafter with his Persian Letters, to show on what contradictory principles his lordship can oppose.

Grenville is fallen below contempt; Sandwich and his parson Anti-Sejanus* are hooted off the stage. Mr. Pitt's abilities I am told have shone with greater lustre than ever, and with more variety. There is a report here that he has actually accepted the administration. I do not believe that he has yet, though I am sure no French *wishes* coined the report. I could not have believed, if I had not come hither, how much they dread him.

Well! all this paves the way to what I wish, liberty to my country and liberty to me. Tranquillity bounds my ambition. To see Grenville, and such wretches grovelling in the mire, gilds the peaceable scene. How many wretches have I lived to see England escape! Thank God I am not philosopher enough not to be grateful for it! I would not wrestle, like the *savants* here, against any powers beyond those of this world. I may spurn pigmies of my own size; but do not question what I cannot fathom. Gods of stone, or kings of flesh, are my derision; but of all gods that were ever invented, the most ridiculous is that old lumpish god of the Grecian sophists, whom the modern literati want to reinstate—the god Matter. It would be like a revolution in England in favour of the late Pretender after he was bed-ridden.

If you receive any one of my letters, pray assure Sir James Macdonald that I have answered his; but when they miscarry to you, I have less hopes of one reaching him. Direct your next to Arlington Street.

LETTER LXXXIV.

Calais, April 20, 1766.

I AM here waiting for the tide, my dear sir, and cannot employ my leisure better than in reviving our correspondence, which has not

* One Scot, a clergyman, employed by Lord Sandwich to write in the newspapers against Mr. Pitt. He signed his papers Anti-Sejanus.

languished from any fault in me, but from the difficulties and dilatoriness of the French couriers, from my want of English news, and from my unwillingness to talk on our affairs in the heart of Paris. All those obstacles cease now, and you will find no change or coolness in my friendship.

Mr. Conway has been twice dangerously ill, both times from neglect. He had a scorbutic eruption, caught cold, neglected it, it turned to a high fever, he was thrice bled, and recovered. His first sally was to his Sabine farm, whither the Opposition wanted so much to send him. A deep snow fell, but he would walk out to see his improvements. The eruption, which had returned on his breast, struck in suddenly, and he fainted away; but it took a rheumatic turn, and the Duke of Richmond writes me word that he is recovering. In the mean time affairs have run into confusion. Mr. Pitt, notwithstanding he has been so much announced for coming in, has certainly not yet been treated with, and probably grows impatient, for of late he has suddenly turned his artillery against the Ministry,—for who saves their country for their country's sake? I expect to find things in much disorder; but I am used to that, and grown indifferent to it.

The Hereditary Prince has landed on this side, and will make you a visit before his return. As he has left affairs unsettled, I cannot think Mr. Pitt's junction very likely, which I do not doubt but his highness has much laboured. He will not probably be so much in fashion at Paris as he would have been two years ago. Their admiration is more worn out than the sense of their losses. Our papers say, it has been discovered that France was at the bottom of the insurrections of the White Boys in Ireland. It is the age of revolts, and one has just broken out which she did not expect, and which is likely to tie up her best instrument. You do not hesitate, to be sure, to guess that I mean the insurrection at Madrid. Perhaps Squilace* is even already landed with you. The King of Aranjuez refuses to return to his capital: sometimes he is sick, sometimes it is the season; in bigger moments, he will fix at Seville. In short, whether frightened or betrayed, he has made a wretched figure, and I have no doubt but the Spanish nobility are heartily glad he has, if they are not more.

When the Spanish diadem totters, what royal head but must ache? I would not answer, but there may be some twitches in the one† that has lately declared itself so omnipotent, and retained so much of his ancient Jesuit confessor's lessons as to distinguish between an oath to God *for* his people and *to* his people. It is such a declaration as must have made deep impressions, though the thunder has hitherto struck every body dumb. The first moment of difficulty or disaster, the first war, will undoubtedly revive the resentment of a nation, which has chosen to crouch; but pretended to say that it was voluntarily and from affection. For the nobility, they are to a man

* Prime Minister to Charles the Third, and driven out of the kingdom by the people.

† Louis the Fifteenth: he had lately held a *lit de justice*, in which he had asserted his authority in very strong terms, and forbidden the Parliament to dispute his acts.

rejoiced; they hate these discussions, and are glad to be eased of thinking, which is equivalent to the headach in a man of quality.

You will naturally here ask me how I like France upon the whole? So well, that I shall certainly return hither. I have received most uncommon civilities and real marks of friendship, and shall ever preserve great gratitude for them. I wish the two nations to live eternally at peace, and shall be glad to pass my time between them. My principles can never grow monarchic, but I never entered in the least into their politics. In the first place, politics were what I came hither to avoid; and in the next, I think it indecent in a stranger to meddle with those of another country, where he is well received. Tranquillity is all I ask for the rest of my days, and I shall sedulously avoid every occasion of disturbing myself. When I reflect on how prodigious a quantity of events I have been witness to or engaged in, my life seems equal to Methuselah's. I sometimes can hardly believe that I have not lived twice; but indeed there has been no pause to distinguish my two lives. My natural life, between an excellent constitution and the repairer gout, seems likely to add a codicil to Methuselah's.

I shall leave the rest of my paper for London, where I must pass some days before I get to Strawberry Hill, though thither my impatience is all pointed. Goodnight.

Wednesday, April 23rd, Arlington Street.

I arrived last night. Mr. Conway is not yet come to town, nor will, but is expected to-morrow. Mr. Pitt has kicked and cuffed to right and left, and all is disorder. I don't guess what the sediment will be!

Lord Clive has just sent us the whole kingdom of Bengal, which the Great Mogul has yielded to this little Great Mogul without a blow. He has made an infant nabob, and settled a regency; and when all expenses are paid, there will be remitted to England yearly a million and a half; we may buy another war in Germany and subsidize two or three electors, for we shall scorn to be the better for this money ourselves. East-India stock is risen ten per cent. Adieu!

LETTER LXXXV.

Arlington Street, May 22nd, 1766.

At last, my dear sir, I begin to see daylight: the present ministry, I think now, will stand. Mr. Pitt missed his opportunity, and pushed his haughtiness a little too far, and I believe is grievously disappointed. Nothing was more plain than his eagerness to return to power, but he took it upon too high a style, and miscarried. The court did not wish for a master, nor many of the ministers for a dictator; yet he was courted by the latter to the last. He would not vouchsafe to treat but personally with the King, who would not send

for him a third time. He then veered towards his kin, and having laid out all his dignity with the ministers, was condescending enough towards the Grenvilles. Lord Temple met him half way, but George Grenville's wounds were too fresh to close so soon, and he took the counterpart of Pitt; for having repeated the most abject advances to Bute, he indemnified his pride by holding off from Pitt, and so both are left in the lurch, and both have taken to the last quieting draught of disappointed ambition, the country. The Duke of Grafton has sacrificed himself to Pitt's pride, and has resigned the Seals, which are given to the Duke of Richmond, who kisses hands to-morrow. Lord Rochford, I think, will go to Paris.

The promotion of the Duke of Richmond pleases me extremely; it makes a united administration, and a little prudence and management may make it a permanent one.

Luckily for us, it has been a time when we could afford to play the fool. France has neither heads, generals, nor money, and Spain has got its hands full; and we have got rid of our enemies there, the French and Italian ministers.

As I love big politics, I am waiting with impatience for more news of Prince Heraclius, who, we are told, is on the high road to Constantinople. When he has pulled down the Mufti, pray fetch him to burn old Mother Babylon for a witch. You know I have always sighed for thundering revolutions, but have been forced to be content with changes of Ministers. Oh! but we have discovered a race of giants! Captain Byron has found a nation of Brobdignags on the coast of Patagonia; the inhabitants on foot, taller than he and his men on horseback. I don't indeed know how he and his sailors came to be riding in the South Seas. However, it is a terrible blow to the Irish, for I suppose all our dowagers now will be for marrying Patagonians. Somewhere else too, but I am a sad geographer—there is a polished country discovered in those seas. They must be barbarous indeed if they exceed London and Paris! Have you heard of Lally's tragedy; that they gagged him lest he should choke himself with his own tongue, which is not the easiest sort of self-murder in the world, and that the mob clapped their hands for joy during the execution? When a nation has behaved cowardly, they always think to repair it by cruelty; so poor Byng was murdered—and now this man, who was a tyrant, but certainly not guilty to his country. I know our people always accused him of breaking his word with us to serve the cause of France.

If it is too soon to conduct Prince Heraclius to Rome, and you have quite annihilated the Pretender, and have nothing else to do, I wish you would think for me of the other volumes of Herculaneum. Mount Vesuvius seems out of humour, and may destroy all the copies.

We have no news of any kind but these dregs of politics. The town empties, and will be deserted after the birth-day. I shall soon settle at Strawberry for the summer, which is not begun yet, from a succession of rains and east winds; and, as I have no disappointed

ambition, I don't choose to retreat from one fireside to another. Adieu!

LETTER LXXXVI.

Strawberry Hill, June 9th, 1766.

The session of Parliament has at last ended, and the ministry have a lease of five or six months longer. This is the most one can depend upon, notwithstanding my views were so sanguine in my last; but their heads not being quite so well ballasted as their hearts, it is difficult to say how long they will swim. Your friend, the whitest of our white princes,* was very nearly oversetting their bark as it was making land. He had obtained a promise from his brother and Lord Rockingham, of a parliamentary settlement on him and his younger brothers, which would have raised their appanages to 20,000*l.* a-year each. It was neglected till the last days of the session; when Mr. Conway, who had not been made acquainted, objected to so considerable a donation being hurried through the remnant of a thin house, especially as it was universally disapproved, the ministers having the good fortune to have most people agree with them on all points against the opposition of which this royal highness is a chief. The ministers gave in to Mr. Conway's opinion; the duke insisted, but at last the King consented that it should be postponed till next year, after recommending it to the house, with the demand for his sister's fortune, the future Queen of Denmark. If you have your royal visiter again this summer, you must expect to hear Mr. Conway much reproached. I will dispense with your bearing it patiently, if it procures you the red riband. As stability is not the property of ministerial tenures at present, be always upon your guard what you write to me, for your letters may find new faces at the post-office before I have time to prepare you for them.

The Great Commoner† is exceedingly out of humour, and having duped himself, taxed the ministers with perfidy; he would never connect with them in or out, and who, having proscribed half of them would not vouchsafe to treat with the rest. The people who think every thing right that he does, or does not, and who, as often as he changes his mind backwards and forwards, think that right too, take all the pains they can to indulge his pride. He has been at Bath; they stood up all the time he was in the rooms, and while he drank his glass of water; and one man in Somersetshire said to him as he passed through a crowd, I hope *your majesty's* health is better! I am glad,—no, I don't know whether I am not sorry, that he is not

* The Duke of York. † A common phrase of Mr. Pitt.

at Quito, where they have insisted on crowning one of their fellow-subjects King of Peru. 'Tis a lucky revolution for us, and would have pleased me entirely if they had chosen a Peruvian. However, the poor Peruvians must have some comfort in seeing their tyrants punish themselves.

We have a Russian Garrick here, the head of their theatre, and, like Shakspeare, both actor and author. He has translated Hamlet, and it has been acted at Petersburgh. I could wish the parallel were carried still farther, and that after this play acted before the Empress *Gertrude*, the assassin of her husband, she were to end like Hamlet's mother.

The King and Queen have been here this week to see my castle, and stayed two hours. I was gone to London but a quarter of an hour before. They were exceedingly pleased with it, and the Queen so much that she said she would come again. I do wish, my dear sir, you could once see it! It would for me be the most pleasing interruption that could happen to our correspondence. Adieu!

LETTER LXXXVII.

Arlington Street, July 11th, 1766.

I HOPE you have minded me, and are prepared. Nay, if you did but calculate, you must have expected a revolution. Why, it was a year yesterday that the ministers had held their places. Surely you did not think that Secretaries of State and Lords of the Treasury are of more importance, or ought to be more permanent than church-wardens! If you did, you do not know my lord Bute. As Petulent says of Millamant and her lovers, he makes no more of making ministers than of making card-matches.

The late ministers—I talk of those who were in office three days ago, stuck to their text; that is, would not bow the knee to the idol that keeps behind the veil of the sanctuary. They were content to have shown some civilities to one or two of his family, and asked the King if there was any body his Majesty wished particularly to have placed? It was now too late: the answer was "No!" On Sunday last, without any communication to the ministers, the Chancellor,* who can smell a storm, and who has probably bargained for beginning it, told the King that he would resign. The ministers saw this was a signal of something, though they did not know what; and having found of late that they could obtain no necessary powers for strengthening themselves, determined to resign. They should have done so on Wednesday; but the old obstacle, Newcastle, and one or two more, prevailed to defer their resolution till to-day. Mr. Conway alone had determined, when he should quit, to recommend sending for Mr. Pitt. To their great surprise, when they severally went

* Lord Northington.

into the closet, the King, *sans façon*, declared that he *had* sent for Mr. Pitt. Mr. Conway replied, that he was very glad of it, and hoped it would answer. To him much graciousness was used; he was told that it was hoped never to see an administration of which he should not be part. This looks as if the plan was arranged, and that he was to remain; for a cool leave, very cool, was taken of all the rest.

You have now the sum total of all I know, except that, half an hour ago, I heard Mr. Pitt was arrived. What his list will be is a profound secret. Probably, it will be picked and culled from all quarters. If the symptom of an arrangement being settled, which I mentioned above, had not appeared, I should say, "Stay, this is not the first time that Mr. Pitt has been sent for, and gone back *re-infectâ*." Oh! but though they are not cured of sending for him, he may be cured of going back. Well, but on the other side, his scheme of breaking all parties may not succeed—pray don't think I mean that the constituents of parties are all men of honour, and will not violate their connexions. No; but the very self-interest that would tempt them to desert may at last keep them together. Men will find out that the tenure of places is too precarious. It grows not worth while to let themselves be dragged through every kennel for the salary of a single year.

There may be another difficulty. Will Mr. Pitt propose Lord Temple for the Treasury? Will he take it? Will he accept without George Grenville? And will the latter serve under both? Can these three act together? Will Grenville be endured when Mr. Pitt is called, only to avoid being forced to call for Grenville? Oh, I could ask you, or your may ask me, twenty other questions, that I cannot answer, and that a few days will. What will popularity say to the union of Pitt and Bute? Will Mr. Pitt's fortune salve that? Will it please the nation to see him sacrifice a most popular administration to the favourite, who fall because they withstood the favourite? Truly, I do not yet know; but one thing I do know, that Mr. Pitt must disoblige so many more than he can content, that by this day twelvemonth I may probably send you another revolution.

As to you, my dear sir, I am not apprehensive for you. This is not one of those state-quakes that reach to foreign ministers. Mr. Pitt is not a man of vengeance; nor, were he, could he have any animosity to you. Had the former ministry returned I would not have warranted you; the favour you received from Mr. Conway may have been noted down in their black book, and the red riband would have added another dash. In all cases you had better not say much in answer to this. The new plan may blow up before it takes place, and what might succeed it is impossible to guess. I will write to you again as soon as any thing is settled, or if the machine falls to pieces in the erection.

You will soon see at Florence the son of Madame de Boufflers, to whom I have been desired to give a letter. As I conclude the new French minister,* who is much connected with his mother, will

* Monsieur De Barbantane.

be at Florence before his arrival, he will not have great occasion for your civilities. However, for once I will beg you rather to exceed in them, for particular reasons. His mother is the mistress, and very desirous of being the wife, of the Prince of Conti. She is a *sçavante*, *philosophe*, author, *bel esprit*, what you please, and has been twice in England, where she has some great admirers. She was very civil to me at Paris, and at the same time very unpleasant, for being a protectress of Rousseau, she was extremely angry, and made the Prince of Conti so, at the letter I wrote to him in the name of the King of Prussia. It was made up, but I believe not at all forgiven, for it is unpardonable to be too quick-sighted, and to detect any body's idol. Rousseau has answered all I thought and said of him, by a most weak and passionate answer to my letter, which showed I had touched his true sore: and since, by the most abominable and ungrateful abuse of Mr. Hume, the second idol of Madame de Boufflers, to whom she had consigned the first. This new behaviour of Rousseau will not justify me in her eyes, because it makes me more in the right; therefore I should wish, as the only proper return to a woman, to be of use to her son. Adieu!

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Arlington Street, July 11, 1766.

The Comte de Boufflers, who does me the honour of carrying this letter, is the gentleman for whom I have already told you I interest myself so much. His birth and his rank, added to the uncommon merits and talents of the countess, his mother, will everywhere procure him the proper distinctions. If Madame de Boufflers has done me the honour of asking what she is pleased to call a recommendatory letter of her son to you, you may be sure I had not the vanity of accepting such an honour with any other view than to procure you so agreeable an acquaintance. You are too just to merit of all nations to estimate it by countries; and yet if you can find a way of being more civil than ordinary, I must beg that art may be employed for the amusement and service of Monsieur de Boufflers while he is at Florence. Madame de Boufflers has done so much honour to England and Englishmen, that you will be a very bad representative of both if you do not endeavour to pay some of our debts to her son. Adieu! my dear sir.

LETTER LXXXIX.

Arlington Street, July 18, 1766.

Last post I put your blood into a little ferment; but now I send you a quieting draft. We were very uneasy for four days, for Lord

Temple not only came to town on the King's summons, and by Mr. Pitt's desire, but saw both, and, what was worse, stayed here. There was no fishing out a syllable of what passed. Few of the present administration, or their friends, would have stayed, if Temple had accepted; not a man of them, if he dragged his brother George along with him. As his own acceptance would have hampered Mr. Pitt, his lordship's *amiable* temper made that very probable; for, if he got in himself, he might have wriggled his brother in afterwards; and this was much to be apprehended, for family-interest visibly pointed to that measure. Happily, family-pride and malice predominated. He stickled for George; Mr. Pitt withstood him to his face, and would not budge an inch. Thus mortified, he took a natural turn, and asked Mr. Pitt what he intended to do for Lord Bute's friends? He replied, considerably. Then came on the rupture. Yesterday Lord Temple saw the King; repeated his insolent demands; was rejected with proper spirit, and is gone—I trust, for ever. However, he ruffled Mr. Pitt so much, that yesterday he had a great deal of fever, and was not able to see even the Duke of Grafton, whom he had sent for to town.

Nothing could be so happy as these events. The nation had scarce a wish, or at least their wishes were divided between Mr. Pitt and the present ministers. The city was even discontent with the prospect of a change; yet they wanted strength, and he brings it. All the unpopular will remain out of place, and if they please, in opposition. Mr. Pitt's name will cover any satisfaction that is given to Lord Bute, and the ministers have the credit of having resisted paying court to him. If any thing can give stability, this concurrence of popularity and integrity will.

What the changes will be, I neither know nor much care. If the Duke of Richmond could be satisfied, I should be quite so, and much more so than they who see all their wishes gratified. My whole ambition was to quit politics. I leave them happily and gloriously settled, and an exclusion given to the public's and my private enemies. The King may be happy if he will, and the people are no longer in danger of arbitrary power. The ministers will withstand that, and Mr. Pitt's name will keep Europe in awe. 'Tis a great æra, my dear sir, and a new birthday for England!

You are perfectly secure; for I suppose you will not resign your post in compliment to the Grenvilles. Your *visiter*,* who has contributed a little to this storm, will by no means find his account in it, and may possibly, therefore, still make you another visit.

You shall hear the changes when they are settled, though of little importance now, and I should think not likely to extend far. Adieu!

* Edward, Duke of York.

LETTER XC.

Arlington Street, July 23, 1766.

I RECEIVED yours of the 5th, last night, with the enclosed for Lord Hilsborough, which I will deliver the moment he arrives. I am glad of every new friend you acquire, especially in a sensible man; but I doubt whether just at present he can be of any use to you. He has no connexion with Mr. Pitt, who is at this moment the sole fountain of honour, as my last two letters will have told you.

Your eagerness for the red riband I see still continues, and I am sorry for it, both as I think it a plaything not worth your care, and not likely to be soon gratified. In a season of such frequent convulsions, you must be content, I fear, to keep your seat. Though Mr. Conway will continue in his, the disposition of favours will not lie much in his province; Mr. Pitt too, I should think, would be dressing up military men in plumes, as trophies and remembrances of his own former glory, which may want to be recalled to the people's memory. Every favour you obtain from one set of men, will be a demerit with their antagonists, and the more garlands you wear, the sooner you may be sacrificed. The present shock, I am persuaded, will not reach you, though you will have a master entirely new; Lord Shelburne will be he: a destination not at all known yet, but I suppose it will be so presently, for Mr. Pitt is at this instant with the King, arranging the outlines of his system. The Duke of Grafton is to be at the head of the Treasury, and Charles Townshend Chancellor of the Exchequer. The latter was sent for, and arrived exulting. Yesterday his crest fell terribly; Mr. Pitt sent him two dictatorial lines, telling him, that he was too considerable not to be in a responsible place, and therefore would be proposed by him on the morrow, to the King for Chancellor of the Exchequer, to which he required a positive answer by nine at night. This was plain. You are not to remain Paymaster, but are to be *promoted* from seven thousand pounds a-year, to seven-and-twenty hundred—to such contemptuous slavery has his enormous folly reduced his enormous parts!

You see the new colour of the times: the style will be exalted, but it will be far from meeting with universal submission. The house of Grenville is not patient: the great families that will be displaced are by no means pleased. The dictator, I think, will not find his new magistracy pass on so smoothly as his former; but one cannot judge entirely, till more of his plan comes forth. I shall be able to tell you more before this letter sets out, two days hence; but the stability with which I flattered myself when I wrote last, is not quite so promising as it was. A great point, still wrapt in myterious darkness, is, whether Lord Bute is to be taken by the hand or not. It will secure the closet, but shake the popularity; and Lord Temple

is not a man to let it pass unnoticed. Your *White* Friend* I believe will not find him very considerable in the new system.

I am sorry for poor Count Lorenzi; but when his services were treated with such ingratitude, is it probable his family will be used better?

Prince Ferdinand has quarrelled with the King of Prussia, and thrown up all his employments. We have had a motion here, that he would go into the French service: the event of Mr. Pitt might hinder that, if between his two heroes the balance did not incline to the Monarch.

As we shall love now to humble France and Spain, your having bullied their ministers on the Pretender's affair may be much in your favour. On any proper occasion, I will get Mr. Conway to set your merits forth. On every occasion I beg you to be as haughty as may be; you no longer represent the King, but Mr. Pitt; and pray keep up all the dignity of his crown. It will be your own fault, if you don't huff yourself into a red riband. This is my serious advice; as well as my temper. You know I love to have the majesty of the people of England dictate to all Europe. Nothing would have diverted me more than to have been at Paris at this moment. Their panic at Mr. Pitt's name is not to be described. Whenever they were impertinent, I used to drop, as by chance, that he would be Minister in a few days, and it never failed to occasion a dead silence. The Prince of Masserano here is literally in a ridiculous fright, and I don't doubt but the King his master will treat Madrid with uncommon condescension.

Wednesday night.

You must not wonder that the style of my letters fluctuates. Nothing wears so changeable a face as politics, especially in such unsettled times. Consider too, I write you journals, not history. Madam History collects the result of events and forms a gross detail. She would have enough to do if she specified their daily ages. Well, then, I think we shall have a good and stable settlement at last. Mr. Pitt has opened his budget in private, but I must not send it yet. There will be very few alterations, and no leaven. The present administration will be retained or pacified. Charles Townshend will be suffered to remain where he was. You shall know more soon; you may be easy, for I assure you I am so. Adieu!

Friday. Weather changeable.

The new plan does not move on kindly, but though there may be hitches, it will certainly take place. Mr. Pitt is resolved, and would not want recruits, if the present corps should disband. He takes the Privy Seal himself, and Lord Camden is to have the Great Seal: the Chancellor to be President. Charles Townshend changed his mind again yesterday, went to Mr. Pitt, and desired to be Chancellor of

* Edward, Duke of York.

the Exchequer. Mr. Pitt replied coldly, that the place is full. I believe Mr. Dowdswell, continues Mr. Pitt, has certainly been moderate, far beyond what could have been expected, yet it does not satisfy—those that are to go out. That old wretch the Duke of Newcastle is moving heaven and earth (but heaven and earth are not easily moved with a numbed finger of seventy) to raise dissatisfaction; and I suppose will end, like Lord Bolingbroke, laying plans at fourscore to govern under the Prince of Wales, who is now almost five.

LETTER XCI.

Arlington Street, Aug. 1st, 1766.

Well! Europe must have done talking of Mr. Pitt; there is no longer such a man. He is Lord Privy Seal, and Earl Chatham. I don't know how Europe will like it, but the city and the mob are very angry. The latter, by which I do not mean to exclude the former, prove that it was only a name they were attached to, for as he has not advised a single measure yet, they can have no reason to find fault. Such as know why they are angry, though they will not tell you their true why, dislike his quitting the House of Commons, where he had more opportunity of doing jobs for them.

This dust will soon be laid, though my Lord Temple has a long foot, and will keep kicking it up as long as he can. Every thing is settled but a few lower places; and as but few have resigned, and some full as important are acquired, I see nothing at present to prevent the new establishment from lasting.

The Chancellor* is President of the Council, in the room of Lord Winchelsea, with a pension of 4000*l.* a year into the bargain. I neither approve the pension nor the person, for he is never sober after dinner, and causes are only heard before the council in the afternoon. Lord Shelburne, as I told you, is Secretary of State. The Duke of Grafton at the head of the Treasury, where Charles Townshend has fixed at last as chancellor of the Exchequer. Colonel Barré will have the vacant Vice-treasurership of Ireland, and James Grenville has another in the room of Lord George Sackville, who is rather cruelly removed. Lord Howe returns to Treasurer of the Navy, which had not been filled up.

Lord Camden has the Great Seal; Wilmot succeeds him as Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; and Yorke has resigned, finding that all his trimming and double dealing could not make him Chancellor, and unable to digest Pratt's promotion. Mr. Mackenzie will be restored to the Privy Seal of Scotland. Lord Dartmouth has resigned the Board of Trade, having been on the point of be-

* Earl of Northington.

coming third Secretary of State for America, which now will not be disjoined from the Southern Province; and Lord John Cavendish has quitted the Treasury. I believe resignations will stop here: Newcastle's people are weary of following him in and out, and see what every body else sees but himself, that seventy-three and ambition are ridiculous comrades. Mr. Stanley goes ambassador to Russia; I do not know who to Spain.

So much for this revolution. I don't mean that we shall not have lampoons and libels. My Lord Temple and the mob are cross; and the former was born to gratify the latter: he has no other talent. George Grenville's endless harangues must wait till the Parliament meets, where he will speak so long that nobody will perceive that he has none to speak on his side.

Well! have not I been punctual and diligent? You must now give me a few holidays. I am going to Strawberry, and shall think no more of politics. I carried your letter to Lord Hilsborough, and met him in his chariot going to court, and could only reach your letter to him. He is talked of for coming in, but I do not know whether there will be any room. Adieu!

LETTER XCII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 9, 1766.

I HAVE had nothing great to tell you since my last. Lord Chatham continues to be ill-treated by the mob and the gout, and is going to Bath. The Bedford-squadron offered themselves: there was not room for them; the Admiralty was tendered to Lord Gower, but he would not sell himself by retail; and it was given to Sir Charles Saunders, Lord Egmont having resigned it. Lord Granby is made Commander-in-Chief, to the mortification and emolument of Lord Ligonier, who has accepted an Irish Earl's coronet for his ancient brows and approaching coffin, and got fifteen hundred a-year pension settled on his nephew. In consideration of Lord Granby's preferment, his father has given up Master of the Horse, to which Lord Hertford succeeds, that Lord Bristol* may go to Ireland. He was going to the south of France, in a dying state, but the sole prospect of a throne, ermine, and beefeaters, has cured him. The nomination of this nymph to rule Huns and Vandals, is the joke of all companies—I dread his being brought to bed, like Pope Joan, as he goes to Parliament.

I don't like your prospect of famine; for your change of ministry, let it pass. Our harvest, though the season has been so fine, turns out ill, the preceding rains having starved it with weeds. At least, as every incident contributes to raise prices, bread is raised, and people are very clamorous against exportation of corn. There is no

* George William Hervey, second Earl of Bristol.

living in this country under twenty thousand pounds a-year; not that that suffices, but it entitles one to ask a pension for two or three lives.

Of myself I can give you but a melancholy account. For these five or six weeks I have been extremely out of order, with pains in my stomach and limbs, and a lassitude that wore me out. They tell me it is the gout flying about me. If there is any difference, but I hate haggling about obscurities, I should rather think it the rheumatism. However, I am to go to ask the Bath-waters what it is, and where they would please to have it settle. What afflicts me most is, that I am persuaded that this place is too damp for me. I revive after being in London an hour, like a member of Parliament's wife. It will be a cruel fate, after having laid out so much money here; and building upon it as the nest of my old age, if I am driven from it by bad health! To be forced back into the world, when I am sick of it; to live in London, which I detest, or to send myself to Paris, which I like as little; to find no benefit from a life of temperance, to sit by a fire instead of braving winds and weather; in short, to grow to moralize—oh! 'tis piteous enough! I dread owning I am ill, because every body talks nonsense to one, and wants to quack one; concealing it, looks like an affectation of philosophy, which I despise. In physicians I believe no more than in divines—in short, I was not made for an invalid; I mean my mind was not, and my body seems made for nothing else. I thought I could harden paper to the consistence of stone—I am disappointed and do not like it; for, though I can laugh at myself, I shall be tired of laughing long at the same thing; in short, I might as well have conquered the world. Sententious poets would have told me, that it signified little, as I had not conquered myself. I have conquered myself and to very little purpose! Wisdom and foresight are just as foolish as any thing else, when you know the bottom of them. Adieu!

P.S. I must beg you, if you can get them, to send me the other volumes of Herculaneum; I have never had but the first, and the catalogue, which last has no prints. This is asking you to send me a present, but I have no scruple with you, though I am so delicate on that head, that I should be sorry some of my first friends knew, that so far from refusing presents, as I do from them, I had begged one.

LETTER XCIII.

Arlington Street, Sep. 25, 1766.

When I told you in my last that I was ill, I did not think it would prove so very serious as it has done. It turned to an attack on my stomach, bowels, and back, with continued vomitings for four days. You will ask what it was? so I did. The physician, for Lord Hertford and Mr. Conway sent for one whether I would or not, pronounced it the gout; and because he had pronounced so, was determined it should be so, and plied me with fire, gunpower, and all the

artillery of the college, till, like a true general, he had almost reduced the place to a heap of ashes. This made me resolve to die in my own way, that is coolly. I refused to take a drop more of his prescriptions; have mended ever since; and am really now quite well, and quite convinced that it was no more the gout than the small-pox, but a violent disorder in my stomach. This was my first physician, and shall be my last. How dear one pays for health and justice; and how seldom one obtains them even for buying!

I am going to the Bath, with more opinion of the journey and change of air, than of the waters, for even water may be too hot for me. 'Tis a sort of complaisance too; and all these trials, when one is no longer young, I regard but as taking pains to be well against one dies. I am pretty indifferent when that may be, but not so patient under the appendixes of illness; the advice every body gives one, their infallible remedies, and, what is worse, being confined, and thereby exposed to every idle body's visit, and every interested body's flattery that expects a legacy. I had a relation the other day with me, whom I very seldom see, and who begged I would excuse, as I was so ill, her not being able to help laughing violently at some very trifling thing I said. I will leave her a certain cure for that laugh; that is, nothing.

Would you believe that such a granary as England has been in as much danger as your mountains? not of famine, but of riots. The demands for corn have occasioned so much to be exported, that our farmers went on raising the price of wheat till the poor could not buy bread; indeed, they will eat none but the best. Insurrections have happened in several counties, and worse were apprehended. Yesterday the King, by the unanimous advice of his Council, took upon him to lay an embargo, which was never done before in time of peace. It will make much clamour, among the interested, both in interest and politics; but in general will be popular. The dearness of every thing is enormous and intolerable, for the country is so rich that it makes every body poor. The luxury of tradesmen passes all belief. They would forfeit their characters with their own profession if they exercised an economy that would be thought but prudent in a man of quality in any other country. Unless the mob will turn reformers and rise, or my Lord Clive sends over diamonds enough for current coin, I do not see how one shall be able soon to purchase necessaries.

Count Schoualloff, the favourite of the late Czarina—pray mind, not of this tigress—is here. I knew him at Paris, and when he was here before, and love him much as one of the most humane, amiable beings upon earth. He is wandering about Europe till this tyranny be overpast, and talks of going to Italy. Pray be acquainted with him: your two natures were made for one another. He is very ill paired with Rasomoufski, the late Hetman of the Tartars, who was forced into the conspiracy, as they say, against the murdered Czar. The woman he served has displaced him, but given him a pension of twelve thousand pounds sterling a-year. He is a noble figure, of the

Tartar mould; but I do not advise you to cultivate *him*. I have refused to be acquainted with him, though Schoualloff desired to bring him to me. He is not a Brutus to my mind. Adieu!

LETTER XCIV.

Arlington Street, October 26, 1766.

I CAME to town yesterday from the Bath; and at night Lady Hertford told me what an anxious letter you had written to old Mr. Larpent about me: she heard it from his son. I did not doubt, my dear sir, your affection to me, and therefore this indirect way has not increased my persuasion of it. As there was no probability of its coming to my knowledge, such an accident might be very satisfactory to another; but I am glad to tell you that it has not added a grain to my conviction of your sincerity. Indeed, I hoped the letter I wrote to you would have reached you as soon as that idle paragraph in the newspapers, and would prevent your being alarmed. For the future, pray observe that it is not necessary to be of importance; an inconsiderable person as I am, may, you see, have a palsy in the newspapers, though they have none out of them. Very ill I was to be sure, and more likely to be quite than half dead. My recovery has gone on fast: the Bath waters were serviceable to me, though they have not removed the pain in my stomach, which comes almost every morning, but goes as soon as it has left its name. After all the wisdom I have heard, and the advice that every body bestows, I have only learnt that if I will do every thing I don't like, and nothing I do, I may live and be very happy—indeed! So life is like virtue, charming for its own sake!—and yet, though I believe few of those who affirm this of virtue, I do believe them about life—they have a fondness for its very dregs; and would patch and darn it till it has not one thread left of the texture for which one wore it at first. What idiots we are! we squander youth, and husband old age; waste our money, and cherish the tattered bag that held it! If there was a day marked on which youth ceases and age commences, I should call that the day of one's death; the first would be the death of pleasure, the other is only the death of pain; and is that such a grievance?

I left Lord Chatham at Bath, in great health and spirits. He does not seem to dread his enemies, nor respect them. I trust he will be as much justified in the first, as he is in the last. I am sure, if the present administration does not hold, I don't know whither we are to go next! Lord Northumberland and Lord Cardigan are made dukes. The older earls, you may be sure, are much offended; and I think the Crown has not acted very wisely in opening a new door to solicitations. It has left itself so little to bestow, that it is come now to its last fund.

I expect that it will rather be a busy than a warm winter. The consideration of our Indian affairs will be the principal object. George Grenville will be very tiresome, and as teasing as tiresomeness can make him; but I should think would not be much supported. His friends the Bedfords rather look from him; and the dismissed part of the last administration are inclined to lie still.

We have had grievous disturbances in many parts of England about corn; but they are pretty well over—as for your Tuscans and Romans, you may starve for us. The papers say that you have got the Hereditary Prince; if you love princes, we can spare you two or three more. Adieu!

P.S. Sir James Grey goes to Madrid. The embassy has been sadly hawked about; not a peer that would take it.

LETTER XCV.

Arlington Street, Nov. 13th, 1766.

You have surpassed yourself, and I really give you a million of thanks. Your attentions to the Marquis de Boufflers have re-echoed to me from Paris. His mother deserved it so little of me, that I am charmed to have returned it in so civil a style. You could scarce have pleased me more, if it had been my best friend.

The Parliament met the day before yesterday, and Lord Chatham's good genius is still constant to him. His two brothers-in-law are left in the suds. The Duke of Bedford and his court have been trafficking to come in, and though the bargain is not struck, they have deserted Grenville. The duke himself spoke with much temper, and not one of his dependants showed themselves in the House of Commons. Should they even return to opposition, it will but double their disgrace, having so openly advertised themselves on sale. Lord Temple and Grenville were warm, though not personal, and you may be sure, not concise. They could not raise a division in either House. The elder had been as little successful the day before. He went to the Lord Mayor's feast, and dragged along with him that wise moppet, Lord Lyttelton: but they could not raise a shout for themselves, or a hiss for any body else, but one who wishes no better to Lord Chatham than they do. The Master of the Rolls was mistaken for Lord Mansfield, and insulted. This latter was reduced on Tuesday to make a speech *against prerogative*,—yes, yes; and then was so cowed by Lord Camden, and the very sight of Lord Chatham, that he explained away half he had said. The Duke of Newcastle, Lord Rockingham, and the late ministers declare against opposition: Lord Temple goes out of town on Sunday, and though there will be long days, it will only be from George Grenville's long speeches. There will be very few even of those before Christmas. I have seldom sent you a better account.

Shall I send you an Italian story? Why, yes; one don't always know what is doing at next door. The Abbé Giustiniani, a noble Genoese, wrote last year a panegyric in verse on the Empress-Queen. She paid him with a gold snuff-box set with diamonds, and a patent of Theologian. Finding the trade so lucrative, he wrote another on the King of Prussia, who sent him a horn-box, telling him, that he knew his vow of poverty would not let him touch gold; and that, having no theologians, he had sent him a patent to be captain of horse in those very troops that he had commended so much in his verses! I am persuaded that the saving of the gold and the brilliants, was not the part which pleased his majesty the least.

The Duke of Portland is married to Lady Dorothy Cavendish, and Lord Mounstuart to a rich ugly Miss Windsor. No other news, but the publication of the quarrel between Mr. Hume and Rousseau, of which few think here, though a great object at Paris, and of which I hope you have never heard. I make a figure in it, much against my will, having great contempt for literary squabbles; but they are meat and drink to those fools the literati. Adieu!

LETTER XCVI.

Arlington Street, December, 8, 1766.

We have been in so strange and uncertain a situation lately, that though I am always very punctual in giving you warning of any revolution, I could not till this very post say a word that would have tended to any thing but to puzzle and alarm you. I now think the cloud pretty well dispersed, and am rather tranquil about what I feared the most. The internal agitations of factions are less easily described than public events, or even than parliamentary occurrences; however, I will relate to you as briefly as I can, what has or had like to have happened.

About three weeks ago Lord Chatham suddenly removed Lord Edgcumbe from being Treasurer of the Household, to make room for Mr. Shelley,* (no very commendable choice,) and without the knowledge of Mr. Conway, who was hurt both at the neglect of himself and the disgrace of one of his friends. The rest of the late administration, who remained, and still more they who had been set aside, were highly offended. Mr. Conway tried every method of satisfying Lord Edgcumbe, but Lord Chatham was inflexible, especially as the party had threatened to resign. While Mr. Conway was labouring a reconciliation, indeed with little prospect of accomplishing it, his friends flew out and left him, without any previous notice, on the opening of the great question on the East Indies. This was very unkind behaviour to him, and was followed by the resignations of the Duke of Portland, Lord Besborough, Lord Scarborough, Lord Manson, Sir

* Afterwards Sir John Shelley.

Charles Saunders, and one or two more. Not content with this, Lord Rockingham and the Cavendishes have never ceased endeavouring to persuade Mr. Conway to resign. Lord Chatham paid him the greatest compliments, and declared how difficult it would be for him to go on without him. The Duke of Grafton was alarmed to the utmost, from his affection for him, and Lord Hertford and I seeing the factious and treacherous behaviour of his friends, and thinking it full as proper that he should govern them, as they him, have done every thing in our power to stop him; and I now at last flatter myself that he will not quit.

Well; still the places were vacant, and it was necessary to get recruits: a negotiation, begun at Bath, was renewed with the Duke of Bedford and his friends; and Lord Gower, the most impatient of that squadron to return to Court, was despatched by Lord Chatham to Woburn, and returned the very next day, with full compliance on the duke's part. Mr. Grenville in the meantime was not idle, but employed others of that faction to traverse it. The duke would listen to no remonstrances, but arrived himself in two days, very moderate in his intended proposals. To his great surprise he learned that two, if not three, of the vacant posts had been disposed of in that short interval; Sir Edward Hawke being made First Lord of the Admiralty, and Sir Piercy Brett another commissioner. The Grenvillians blew up this disappointment, and instead of modest demands, the duke went to Lord Chatham with a list of friends, large enough to fill half the places under the government. This was as flatly refused; the duke went away in wrath—and is to be brought up again this week to vote against the Court. The consequence of all this is, the junction of Lord Chatham and Lord Bute, and the full support of the Crown being given to the former. This has already appeared with much *éclat*, for on an ill-advised division on Friday last, Grenville and the Bedfords were but forty-eight, the court one hundred and sixty-six—a great victory in such a dubious moment, and which I hope will fix the administration. The minority may be increased possibly to-morrow by twenty more on the East-Indian affair, if the Cavendishes and Yorkes carry to it all their little strength.

The Duke of Ancaster is Master of the Horse, and Lord Delawarr succeeds him in the same post to the Queen; Lord Hilsborough and Lord Despencer are joint Postmasters, Nugent first Lord of Trade, and Stanley Cofferer.

This is enough to give you some idea of the late hurricane. I have just received yours of November 18th, with an account of your disorder, and the arrival of Lady Holland.* I wish your letter had been dated a few days later, that I might be sure you had not suffered by your rash attentions to her. You would like her much if you knew her more, as I hope you will at her return. It will be extraordinary indeed if Lord Holland recovers enough to return with her.

* Lady Caroline Lennox, eldest daughter of the second Duke of Richmond, and wife of Henry Fox, first Lord Holland.

Our burlettas will make the fortunes of the managers. The "Buona Figliuola," which has more charming music than ever I heard in a single piece, is crowded every time; the King and Queen scarce ever miss it, Lovattini* is incomparable, both for voice and action. But the serious opera, which is alternate, suffers for it. Guarducci's† voice is universally admired, but he is lifeless, and the rest of the company not to be borne. Adieu! and let me hear you are quite well.

LETTER XCVII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 21st, 1767.

You will think it long, my dear sir, since I wrote to you; which makes me write now, though I have had, nor have any thing new to tell you. The Parliament has been adjourned for a month, and is but just reassembled. The affair of the East-India Company, which promised trouble, has taken a favourable turn, and they have agreed to treat with the ministry, which will prevent the bargain from being haggled in Parliament, if the parties can come to any agreement. Lord Temple and George Grenville have laboured to their utmost to make the usurpation of three Indian provinces, or rather kingdoms, pass for private property; and private property is always willing to profit of the most favourable construction, and to be wonderfully fond of liberty. 'Tis all the obligation a free country has to the rich. Lord Chatham is laid up with the gout at Bath; but the opposition is so insignificant, that we can afford to wait for him.

We have a most dreadful winter, the coldest I ever remember, for you know I was with you in 1640 and 1641. Last year was bitter, but I flattered myself that the season was worse at Paris than at London. It lasted four months: I hope this, which is scarce a month old, will be of much shorter duration.

I am labouring to get you two black dogs, but find it the most difficult thing in the world, as you require them very small. The very little ones are generally but one of a litter. Lord Dacre has a bitch now with puppy, and has promised me one. I must be sure of the parents, or they might seem pretty, and turn out large and ugly.

23rd.

We had plenty of comfortable rain yesterday, and the weather is much softened.

* Lovattini's voice was a mellifluous and rich tenor. The taste, humour, and general spirit of his acting, added to his vocal ability, secured him great and constant applause. —Ed.

† Guarducci was not happy in his figure and countenance, and had no ability as an actor; but his voice was clear and flexible; and by the polished manner of his singing, he not only subdued the prejudice at first excited against him, but surmounted the disadvantage of arriving soon after Manzuoli. In a conversation with Dr. Burney, some years after he left England, Guarducci paid a high compliment to the English, "who," said he, "are such friends to the *composer* that they had rather hear an air in its primitive state, than under the disguise of a performer's *riffioramenti*."—Ed.

LETTER XCVII.

Arlington Street, Feb. 13, 1767.

YESTERDAY I received yours of the 27th of last January, with an account of your distresses on the etiquette between your plaything court and our travelling boys. In truth, both sides are childish, and yet I am disposed to favour the latter, and so I think should you too. What is so insignificant as a Duke of Tuscany? And does his being a slip of Austrian pride make him a jot more important? Three years ago we were confessedly the masters of Europe; and I trust we shall not wave our pretensions without a struggle. An English member of Parliament is part of the legislature, and what is a Tuscan nobleman part of? Has not that haughty Empress-Queen been our pensioner? In short, I approve of bearding all other courts, and particularly an Austrian one, for their ingratitude. I am sure Lord Chatham's spirit will approve your showing any: we shall bow nowhere while he is minister. He is still at Bath, but every thing goes on smoothly. We have two oppositions; that of the late ministry, and that of its predecessors; both very contemptible, and so they would still be were they united; however, while they keep separated 'tis Grenville's only that is odious.

We have no news, but the deaths of some young people of rank. The house of Norfolk has lost its heir of that line; the next branch is Howard of Greystock, who is half mad; yet thither the title must go. It is believed in our coffee-houses that this last young man was poisoned by the Jesuits, who apprehended his turning Protestant. The young Lady Suffolk is dead too, Lord Trevor's daughter; and Lord Harrington's eldest daughter, Lady Fortrose, who has killed herself by wearing white. She is not the first instance; and yet that madness coutinues.

Nothing is so much in fashion as the "Buona Figliuola." The second part was tried, but did not succeed half so well, and they have resumed the first part, which is crowded even behind the scenes. The serious operas are seldom played; for though Guarducci is so excellent, the rest of the performers are abominable, and he cannot draw a quarter of an audience alone.

I am thinking of another little journey to Paris,—not for pleasure; a little for health, as the air there, and motion agree with me, and still more to see my charming blind old woman, Madame du Deffand. As I am got so much out of the world here, you will not suspect me of hunting diversions there. I am not ill, but not quite well. They tell me that my disorder is only nervous; and I believe so, unless, which is more probable, it is that I am growing towards old. One's spirits, even mine, may diminish, without being positively ill. I take it as it comes, and am very indifferent about it. I have seen and remember so much, that my life already appears very long; nay, the first part seems to have been a former life, so entirely are the persons

worn out who were on the stage when I came into the world. You must consider, as my father was minister then, that I almost came into the world at three years old. I was ten when I was presented to George I., two nights before he left England for the last time. This makes me appear very old to myself, and Methuselah to young persons, if I happen to mention it before them. If I see another reign, which is but too probable, what shall I seem then? I will tell you an odd circumstance. Nearly ten years ago I had already seen six generations in one family, that of Waldegrave. I have often seen, and once been in a room with Mrs. Godfrey,* mistress of James II. It is true she doated; then came her daughter the old Lady Waldegrave,† her son the ambassador ;‡ his daughter, Lady Harriot,§ her daughter, the present Lady Powis ;‖ and she has children who may be married in five or six years; and yet I shall not be very old if I see two generations more! but if I do, I shall be superannuated, for I think I talk already like an old nurse. Adieu!

LETTER XCIX.

Monday morning, March 2nd, 1767.

You will not be much surprised, nor totally dismayed, I hope, to hear that the ministry have been beaten in the House of Commons. At least you will not be more astonished than they were who gained the victory. They could scarce believe it. They have once this winter divided but sixteen; and now, slap! were two hundred and six. I will tell you the event, the certain consequences, and the causes. The probable consequences are very doubtful.

Last Friday George Grenville, who during his own administration had declared that he thought he should be able to take off one shilling in four of the land-tax, in the year 1767 was at least as glad to spread that doctrine now as he could have been if minister still. It is a captivating bait to the country gentlemen, and the approach of a general election made it important for them to vote for it. They were brought to town: the late ousted ministers forgetting their actions, and declarations against Grenville, in their new hatred to Lord Chatham, joined in the cry. In short, when we came to a division, we were but 188; they 206. There was still a possibility of reversing this vote to-day, as it had only passed through the committee; but as the court does not doubt its own strength on other questions, it was not thought prudent to rivet the new alliance together, nor venture a second defeat on the most popular question they can have.

The certain consequences are, the loss of the tax, five hundred

* Arabella Churchill, sister of John, first Duke of Marlborough.
† Henrietta Fitz-James, daughter of King James II.
‡ James, first Earl of Waldegrave.
§ Wife to Lord Edward Herbert, second son of the Marquis of Powis.
‖ Barbara Antonia, married to her cousin the first Earl of Powis.

thousand pounds, the diminution of credit, and a year lost of lowering the debt; that is, in more essential words, a year of means lost in another war.

The causes of this event were, the absence of Lord Chatham, who has lingered at Bath and Marlborough till so ill, that he could not come to town. No business was done: the other ministers were uneasy or inactive. The Opposition seized the moment, and collected all their strength. Still this would not have signified; but the friends of the court were so inapprehensive of any defeat, that many of them privately and separately consulted their own popularity, and were actually engaged in the division, before they had any notion of being in the minority.

For the probable consequences, you will immediately conclude, as the opposition does or pretends to do, that there must be a change of the administration. It is not common for a beaten ministry to stand its ground; and this is almost the only instance of the Crown losing a tax. Mr. Pelham indeed lost the sugar-tax, but it was in his outset, and when he had not favour, but was betrayed by his competitor Lord Granville; yet Mr. Pelham stood the blow, and so may Lord Chatham, if he pleases. The King is resolved to support him: Lord Bute falls into the hands of his most detested enemy Grenville, if the latter triumphs; and the late ministers cannot carry Grenville on their backs to St. James's, without contradicting all their actions and professions, and losing all character. Oh! but you will cry, "they are dipped already; they have shaken the credit of their country, to gratify their revenge." It is very true; but before they force St. James's there must be some partition of the spoils agreed on. Lord Rockingham is as ambitious as Grenville himself, and has the same object in view, and is totally unfit for it; and, in truth, that party have never shone by their abilities. Grenville could allow them nothing but what would disgrace them. Another obstacle is, that the city is much displeased with the loss of the tax; and the city looks a little farther, and knows a little better than a parcel of Tory squires, what is necessary to government.

Still I advise you to be prepared. This country is so split into factions, and in so fluctuating a state; we have seen so many sudden revolutions in six years, that we must not yet look on any establishment as very permanent. The court will certainly try any thing but absolute force, to keep out Grenville, who has offended and wounded Lord Bute, past hope of reconciliation; and should they meet again by necessity, neither can in the nature of things, trust the other; for when no obligations could bind Grenville, would his promises, when victorious, bind him? Lord Chatham lay at Reading last night, and will be here to-day; if he exerts his ancient spirit, and approaches nearer to Lord Bute, I have no doubt of his still being triumphant. He must see that, with all their propensity to servility, the House of Commons must be managed; if left to themselves they will exert their freedom, though it be only to choose a new master.

The times calls for prudence. Answer me very cautiously. If a

change should happen, I shall be cautious too, though I think there is no great danger of our being saddled with Grenville yet. There are still resources before it comes to him; nor could he keep his seat without violent convulsions.

In truth, in truth, the prospect is very gloomy! So many errors have been committed of late years, so many have let the game slip out of their hands; there is so much faction, and so little character or abilities in the country, that if our old and steady ally, Fortune, does not befriend us, I don't know where we shall be.—Oh, yes, but I do!

Adieu! I have not time to say a word more; but you know on these occasions, I never neglect you. You shall hear again immediately.

LETTER C.

Arlington Street, Sunday, March 8, 1767.

I HAVE alarmed you, and now will give you a little repose. The victory of the opposition has had no consequences yet; and as they have given the court time to look about, the latter can recover its ground faster than they can gain more. I am sure we found it so four years ago. We did not indeed win a battle, but were so near it, that had we pursued our blow the scale had been turned. The present enemies are composed of two very distinct bodies, and they have already shown how little they were connected. Treachery itself has been of use to us.

Charles Townshend, of whom, when he was taken in, I said that he never could do any hurt but to his friends, has acted as usual. The absence of Lord Chatham at Bath, and still more his having quitted the House of Commons, has given this Proteus courage. He had been hurt by the contemptuous manner in which Lord Chatham had forced him to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. Hurt, too, he was at the preference given to Mr. Conway. His brother, Lord Townshend, of whom he is afraid, for he fears every thing but shame, and who has more design and more revenge, with ten thousand times less of parts, is angry at not obtaining a marquisate, and pushed Charles upon knavery. The latter, delighted to go out of the straight path into a crooked one, instilled into Mr. Conway, or found there scruples against the extent of Lord Chatham's plan for squeezing the East India Company. The Committee of that Company had given in their proposals; Lord Chatham was not content with them; Conway and Townshend were. Here was a fine field for the opposition to try a new battle, and for this they reserved themselves. Last Friday was appointed. Beckford, by Lord Chatham's desire, moved to have the proposal laid before the house. Townshend inflamed the matter as much as he could. Mr. Conway reserved himself, and said little. Charles Yorke, the mysterious oracle of Lord Rockingham, trimmed so much that Grenville was angry, and that brought out his hatred to his allies. In short, the two oppositions could not agree on a single point, and so

did not dare to divide—a symptom of weakness that will probably send back to the court all its renegades. Townshend has acted in his usual wild, romancing, indiscreet manner, and has told every body he is turned out. He is not; and I suppose will beg pardon. We have a fortnight's repose, and if the court is active I think the danger will be over; but consider how many strange heads we have, and how few good ones.

The diminution of the land-tax turns out an unpopular measure. Lord Temple, or Grenville, have procured themselves an address of thanks from the grand jury of Buckingham, but so larded with the exploded stamp-act that it will only revive animosity to them. They have tried for more in other counties, and been refused. The King is firm to Lord Chatham, and peremptory against Grenville. The Rockinghams would join the latter if they dared fluctuate between him and Conway, and I hope now will be blessed with Charles Townshend for their leader.

This is a much more comfortable letter than my last. I do not bid you be confident, for I know the land. But, at least, I think the other side does not abound in judgment more than we do.

I have received yours, with the enclosed for Lord Beauchamp, which I have delivered. He showed it to me; I encouraged him to try to serve you on the first opportunity. You will not think the present is one. Lord Hilsborough urged your cause very strongly the other night to Lady Aylesbury; but I can scarce believe that you will receive it from that quarter unless some considerable change arrives. You will not, I know, take my advice on this head, or I would recommend to you not to mark yourself for a victim, if you could, till the times are more stable. Adieu!

Tuesday, 10th.

Here is no bad postscript. The Grenville and Rockingham factions, finding the mischief they had done themselves by disunion on Friday last, have tried to repair their error; and yesterday, giving only a few hours' notice, got a petition presented by an East-India director against the order for printing their papers. Charles Townshend, though advertised, kept away; but Mr. Conway proposed that on Wednesday (to-morrow) the directors should name the dangerous papers, and did not doubt but the house would forbear printing them. This matter was fought stiffly till nine at night. Mr. Conway never spoke so well, nor Grenville so insolently; challenging the administration to battle on any set day. He will not, I trust, be so eager for such a day now. We divided one hundred and eighty against one hundred and forty-seven. You will say this victory was not great enough; but a court that can stand a defeat from two hundred and six, and has a majority of thirty-three on the next question, is not playing a losing game. The King is firm; Lord Bute's friends warm; and the calculators of chances probably now disposed to bet on the side of the ministry. I have not time to say more. Hope the best.

LETTER CI.

Arlington Street, March 19, 1767.

Well! I think you may begin to compose yourself again. The fortune of my Lord Chatham will ride out the storm though it blows from almost all quarters. The East-Indian affair is entangled in so many difficulties, that the Lord knows when we shall see an end of it, if it can be ended this session. It has slipped from the House of Commons back to the General Court of Proprietors, where they are at this moment actually balloting for two different proposals of accommodation with the government. We were to have gone upon it to-morrow, but must now put it off. The opposition clog it all they can. Grenville wishes to stop it, that he may be minister, and adjust it. So far he and the rest are successful, that they have shut almost every door of supply; but that falls *only* on the nation itself, and of course they do not care. In the meantime the court exerts itself strenuously in support of Lord Chatham: the delays operate for him, and chance has done more than all.

Lord Tavistock, the Duke of Bedford's only son, has killed himself by a fall and kick of his horse, as he was hunting Tuesday was se'nnight. I do not mean that he is dead yet, but he has been twice trepanned, the skull is cracked through, and there are no hopes of his life. No man was ever more regretted; the honesty, generosity, humility, and moderation of his character, endeared him to all the world. The desolation of his family is extreme. Lady Tavistock, passionately in love with him, is six months gone with child. The news came about two hours before she was to go to the opera: they did not dare to tell her the worst so abruptly; so the duke and duchess were forced to go too, to conceal it from her and the Duchess of Marlborough,* who was with child too, and has since miscarried. Two days ago the Duke of Bedford's head broke out in boils, which shows the effort he had made to suppress his agony, and which probably has saved his life; yet subject to the gout, and very nearly blind, if this loss is not fatal, it will certainly make him quit the world; and as his two grandsons are infants of two and three years old, it must loosen the bonds of that party, which was almost all the support George Grenville could boast, for Lord Temple does but join odium to odium. Even the lingering of Lord Tavistock relaxes the activity of that faction. It is a great event, lucky for the administration, but a loss to the country for the time to come.

Charles Townshend's tergiversations appear to have been the result of private jobbing. He had dealt largely in India stock, cried up the company's *right* to raise that stock, has sold out most advantageously, and now cries it down. What! and can a Chancellor of

* Daughter of the Duke of Bedford.

the Exchequer stand such an aspersion? Oh! my dear sir, his character cannot be lowered. In truth, it is a very South-Sea year—at least one third of the House of Commons is engaged in this traffic; and stock-jobbing now makes patriots, as every thing else has done. From the Alley to the House it is like a path of ants.

Mr. Conway is in great felicity, going to marry his only daughter to Lord Milton's eldest son, Mr. Damer. The estate in Lord Milton's possession is already three-and-twenty thousand pounds a-year. Seven more are just coming from the author of this wealth, an old uncle in Ireland, of ninety-three. Lord Milton gives up five thousand a-year in present, and settles the rest; for his two other boys are amply provided for. Miss Conway is to have a jointure of two thousand five hundred, and five-hundred pin-money. Her fortune, which is ten thousand, goes in jewels, equipage, and furniture. Her person is remarkably genteel and pleasing, her face very sensible and agreeable, and wanting nothing but more colour.

> A senator of Rome, while Rome survived,
> Would not have matched his daughter with a prince,

if there had been such rich lords at Rome. I think you should write a compliment on the occasion. It is the more creditable, as Lord Milton sought the match. Mr. Conway gives up all the money he has in the world, and has no East-India bonds. Adieu!

P.S. When you do not hear from me, conclude all goes well.

LETTER CII.

Strawberry Hill, April 5th, 1767.

I am sorry for what you tell me of a successor being thought of for you, though I trust there is no danger of its taking place. Should the old drunken uncle* last, sure the worst that could happen would be, that the nephew† would be overjoyed to obtain what you would refuse, and what he dares not hope for. Without a removal, I have no notion of your being set aside, in the present situation of things. Mr. Conway is so essential to the present system, that nobody would venture to disoblige him; and removing you would be disobliging him.

You now perceive, my dear sir, the prudence of my constant advice to you of not making yourself particularly noticed, or obnoxious by receiving too many favours from any one quarter. Your services are allowed: but might not a riband be thought, or at least be pleaded as a payment? Such unsettled times as these are not a season for thrusting oneself forward. God knows when they will be more

* Lord Northington. † Sir James Wright.

stable! But pray, suffer one on the spot to be a little better judge than you can be. It is not what will figure at Florence but what would give umbrage at London, that it is your business to consider.

No event has happened since my last; and yet the crisis does not seem past. The court, were there no radical evils, would, I think, easily baffle opposition, though great endeavours have been used of late to cement the factions of Rockingham and Grenville into one. Those attempts have not quite succeeded. The marquis thinks it full as necessary for himself to be first minister, as Grenville thinks he should, and neither will bend; at least, though Grenville has appeared the more pliant, his sincerity does not gain the more credit. Nobody can believe him disposed to act under a chit, but till his own purposes are served.

The House of Commons has been engaged this fortnight in examining the East India Company, and every single evidence has brought forth in stronger and stronger colours the right of the Crown to the conquests made by the Company. This was thought the great problematic and ticklish question. There is now the highest probability that the government will carry that point.

But there is a misfortune not so easily to be surmounted, the state of Lord Chatham's health, who now does not only not see the ministers, but even does not receive letters. The world, on the report of the Opposition, believe his head disordered, and there is so far a kind of colour for this rumour, that he has lately taken Dr. Addington, a physician in vogue, who, originally, was a mad doctor. The truth I believe is, that Addington, who is a kind of empiric, has forbidden his doing the least business, though he lies out of town, and every body sees him pass in his coach along the streets. His case, I should think, is a symptomatic fever, that ought to turn to gout; but Addington keeps him so low that the gout cannot make its effort. Lord Chatham's friends are much alarmed, and so they say is Addington himself: yet, what is strange, he calls in no other help.

This delays all business, which had all been too long delayed. America, whence the accounts are unpleasing, is yet to come on the carpet, so, notwithstanding the expedience of putting an end to the session, one knows not when it will be concluded. Whatever happens, I do not think Mr. Conway can be left out of the drama, nor is it probable that Grenville will enter victoriously upon the scene: both King and people hate him; but fools in this country can often do more than wise men can effect or prevent, and Lord Rockingham and his party are silly enough to do a great deal of mischief. Even old Newcastle whets his busy blunted sting. In truth, our squabbles are contemptible, and merely personal; I wish I could think the consequences as indifferent. I wish too, that it may call for your patience to wait the event. As I told you in my last, whenever I do not write, you may be sure no revolution has happened. Be, however, prepared; such a suspense as the present cannot last much longer, but must be determined one way or other. Lord Chatham's recovery and appearance would quash the Opposition. His death would oc-

casion a new settlement, and yet not of necessity pave the way for Grenville.

The papers have told you what I bid you expect, the death of poor Lord Tavistock. The Duchess feels it heavily, but the politicians of his court have decided that the duke shall soon act as if he had forgotten it. Adieu!

LETTER CIII.

Strawberry Hill, Friday, April 17, 1767.

My letter will not set out till Tuesday, though it ought to have gone to-night; but I had not time to write it in town, nor was well enough; for I went to the House of Commons with a very bad cold, was so fatigued, and got such a headach with staying there until two in the morning, that I was obliged to defer notifying our victory to you till I could come hither for a little repose.

The examination of the East India Company turned out so little to the content of the Opposition, and staggered so many of the country gentlemen, who are less hardened than even a patriot Opposition, that they were very impatient to be rid of it. Some ten days ago they gave notice, that unless Beckford, who has conducted the business for Lord Chatham, should, the very moment after closing the evidence, produce his plan and motions, they would propose to—nay, that they would break up the committee; for they already talked as masters, and boasted of having a majority in both Houses. They were encouraged in this vaunt by success in a point that had scarce been contested with them; this was the re-election of most of the late Board of Indian Directors. The Duke of Bedford was carried to the India House to vote—his son had not been dead three weeks. They went farther; carried him to the House of Lords this day se'nnight, and made him open a motion for which Lord Temple had summoned the Lords, though without acquainting them what it was to be: they had concealed the purport from their associates, Lord Rockingham's faction, by which, and more folly, they were defeated. Every body but themselves was shocked at the duke's indecent spirits and insensibility. The motion was, to address the King to set aside an act of the assembly at Massachusett's Bay, in which they have irreverently taken upon themselves the powers of Parliament. Lord Halifax imprudently falling upon Mr. Conway, the Duke of Richmond took his part, and on the previous question voted with Lord Rockingham and five more, with the Court. That old busy sinner, Newcastle, and most of the faction, went away; and the Court had sixty-three to thirty-six. This victory was, however, alarming, as the union of the two factions would have run the Court very hard. Impatient to recover their ground, the Opposition hurried on their impolitic question in our house; and their boasts alarmed the government so seriously, or rather Lord Bute, that he put forth all his

strength; and after a debate of eleven hours, we were two hundred and thirteen to one hundred and fifty-seven. Yesterday the House adjourned for the holidays. Many country gentlemen will probably not come back this session; and unless we commit new absurdities, the Opposition is demolished; but consider, if we had not been wonderfully ingenious for these last three months, our majority might have been double!

When the session will end the Lord knows! We have still the East India business to finish—indeed, to begin, if Lord Chatham will not accommodate with them, but pushes it to extremities. After that, the settlement of America is to come, which is still a more thorny point, but, *Cæsarem vehimus*—we carry Lord Chatham and his fortune; who is as fond of him as ever woman was of a wayward gentleman. He locks up his doors, and will neither see her nor any body else; yet she is as constant as ever; I believe she is like me, and abhors the idea of Grenville for minister.

The Hereditary Prince arrived on Monday night, and two days after news came of his mother's death. I believe he will stay a very little time.

Last night we learned a great event, the total expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain; they are all coming to your next door. It is supposed to have proceeded from their having stirred up the insurrection at Madrid last year, when King Carlos was so wofully frightened. They must be a very silly set of fellows to be still meddling, when the times are so unfavourable. I wish they would be a little absurd here, that we might drive them out too; but in England, follies hurt nobody, nor have time. New ones succeed so rapidly.

LETTER CIV.

Arlington Street, May 12, 1767.

NOTHING was ever so vexatious! I had just written you a long letter of three sides, and laid it upon the hearth to dry, while I stepped into the next room to fetch some sealing-wax; a coal has fallen on it, and I find it all in flames. I have not time to write half of it again: I will just run over the heads, if I can remember them.

My chief article, was a wonderful speech made by Charles Townshend last Friday, *apropos* to nothing, and yet about every thing—about ministries past, present, and to come; himself in particular, whom I think rather past than to come. It was all wit and folly, satire and indiscretion—he was half drunk when he made it; and yet that did but serve to raise the idea of his abilities. I am sorry I have not time to be more particular, it would have diverted you. Nothing else is talked of, or at least was not when I began my letter.

The treaty with the East India Company is at a stop. The Gene-

ral Court went mad, voted themselves a dividend, and dismissed prosecutions against six of their servants, against whom they had commenced suits for bribery. The House of Commons were justly enraged, and we were hatching a bill to prevent irregular dividends for the future; perhaps may extend a retrospect to the last. The Opposition are thunder-struck; which is no little victory; yet were it better the agreement had taken place. The General Court has again voted to treat, but insist on their dividend. Mr. Conway moderates as much as possible, and I hope will be successful. To-morrow we shall sit day and night on America, wherein he adheres to moderation too, but I doubt will be overpowered. Lord Chatham's friends are for warmer work on both heads. Himself is no longer seen at all; consequently you may believe the suspicion of madness does not decrease.

Is not this very magnificent? A senate regulating the Eastern and Western worlds at once? The Romans were triflers to us; and yet our factions and theirs are as like as two peas.

In France there is a great flame on the affair of the Jesuits. It is known that they were to have attempted a revolution in Spain on Holy Thursday. The famous Abbé Chauvelin, the author of their demolition, has again denounced them to the Parliament, and demands their total expulsion on this new provocation, alleging that they were the cause of the late troubles in Bretagne, where they had again got footing. If they make many revolutions, why the devil don't they go to Petersburgh? Nobody could blame them for any mischief they might do to the Czarina.

Well! I must conclude, or my letter will be too late: you may pity me for stewing in the House of Commons at this time of year, but, luckily we have no spring. They say it is the same everywhere, and that the frost has killed all the vines in France and Italy. Adieu!

LETTER CV.

Strawberry Hill, May 24th, 1767.

We are worn out here with the Parliament, but happily the Parliament is almost worn out too; not so much from not having business still before it, but the champions are fairly knocked up. The country gentlemen are all gone, and George Grenville himself, the inexhaustible haranguer Grenville, confesses he is tired. The truth is, he is beaten, has no hopes, and spits blood. Three weeks I trust will give us our quietus. Mr. Conway's moderation and patience has at last brought to bear the accommodation with the East India Company, and it only wants the act of Parliament to finish it. In the meantime the House of Lords has revived the drooping Opposition. Last

Friday they examined the rejection by the Privy Council of the act of assembly of Massachusett's Bay. Lord Mansfield maintained that more was necessary; that it ought to have been declared null *ab initio;* and demanded that the opinions of the judges might be taken. He spoke with all his subtlety, but was very roughly handled by the Chancellor,* and Lord Northington. The judges would not have given their opinions if asked. However, the motion was rejected by only sixty-two voices to fifty-six. You will be startled at so trifling a majority; but the case was, the Opposition had called for papers, which naturally go to the committee; and in a committee proxies cannot be used; so that if the Opposition had even carried the question, they would have lost it the next moment on the report to the House, by thirty proxies to ten.

A more remarkable event of the day was, that the Duke of York spoke for the first time—and against the court; but did not vote. His two brothers† voted with the Ministry. I am assured by every body, for I was not present, that if the Administration can stand till routed by his eloquence, they will be immortal. How he puts one in mind of his father! This is not the only walk of fame he has lately chosen. He is acting plays with Lady Stanhope‡ and her family, the Delavals. They have several times played the Fair Penitent: His Royal Highness is Lothario; the lady, I am told, an admirable Calista. They have a pretty little theatre in Westminster; but none of the royal family have been audience. I never have been at this play; for though I was told I might ask for a ticket, and did not want curiosity, yet as some people have been refused, I did not choose to have such a silly matter to take ill.

Lord Chatham's state, I doubt, is, too clearly, the gout flown up into his head. He may recover, but, as yet, he is assiduously kept from all company. The Opposition have named, and firmly believe, a new Administration, composed of Lord Bute's friends, with the Duke of Northumberland at the head; but I believe their best reason for believing it is, from having applied in that quarter themselves, and been rejected. One event I think will happen before it is long, and which may produce changes. Mr. Conway, I think, will retire, not from disgust, or into Opposition, but from delicacy towards his old friends. This was my chief reason for writing to you to-night. It is not decided yet, nor publicly known, but I chose you should be apprized, and not think there were any reasons more disagreeable for it. To me it will have nothing unpalatable. I have long wished to be off the stage; and nearly three months ago notified my intention of coming into Parliament no more. I am still young enough to enjoy my liberty, without any formal austerity of retiring, and yet shall not be hovering over the scene when it is more decent to have done with it; unless one had the ambition of being an actor, which,

* Lord Camden. † The Dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland.

‡ Sister of Sir Francis Delaval, and wife of Sir W. Stanhope, brother of Philip the celebrated Earl of Chesterfield.

happily, has never been my case. I never was more than prompter. Adieu!

LETTER CVI.

Strawberry-Hill, May 30th, 1767.

You will wonder at another letter so soon, but do not be alarmed. It is yourself you must wonder at; you have occasioned this *hors d'œuvre*. Lady Holland* is just arrived, and has brought me—oh! brought me only the finest little bust† that ever my eyes beheld. I gaze on it from morning till night; and if it were possible for me to part with it, I would send it you back, as the only return, my dear sir, that I can ever make you worthy of such a present. It is more a portrait than any picture I ever saw. The sculptor evidently studied nothing but the countenance. The hair and ears seem neglected to heighten the expression of the eyes, which are absolutely alive, and have a wild melancholy in them that one forebodes might ripen to madness. In short, I do not know whether it is not more exquisite in its kind than my eagle. At least this little Caligula is far superior to my great Vespasian, which was allowed to be the fourth or fifth bust in Rome. I shall make a solemn dedication of it in my pantheon chapel, and inscribe the donor's name. I assure you it is not bronze, whatever you may have thought, but flesh: the muscles play as I turn it round. It is my reigning favourite; and, though I have some very fine things in my collection, I am fonder of none—not of the eagle, nor of my Cowley‡ in enamel.

It arrived to comfort me the very day I heard from Paris that I had no success at the sale of Mons. Julien's cabinet, where every thing sold as extravagantly as if the auction had been here. Your other present, of Montesquieu's letters, was very agreeable too; I could not go to bed till I had finished them at nearly three in the morning; and yet there is very little in them but ease and graces. I am a little scandalized at the notes, which, though very true, are too bitter, considering the persons are alive. Madame Goeffrin§ will be much hurt: indeed, the letters themselves that regard her are very mortifying; and I think it cruel to publish private letters while the persons concerned in them are living. Nobody has a right to publish what the author certainly did not mean such persons should ever see. It is making him inflict a wound against his intention; and such publications must frighten people from writing their private sentiments of others to their most intimate friends. The case happened

* Lady Caroline Lennox, wife of Henry Fox, first Lord Holland.

† A bust of Caligula, found at the discovery of Herculaneum.

‡ A very beautiful enamel miniature by Zincke, from Sir Peter Lely's celebrated portrait. At the dispersion of the Treasures at Strawberry Hill, in 1843, this gem was acquired by Robert Holford, Esq.

§ A celebrated French *bel esprit*.

but last summer to my friend, Lady Suffolk, who found herself in some disagreeable letters of Swift. After this, will you tell me where these letters were printed, and whose the notes are? You may safely; Madame Geoffrin and the Duchess d'Aiguillon were very obliging to me at Paris, and I am sorry they will be vexed; but I have no particular friendship with them, and you may be sure I shall never mention it. I have not even lent the book to any body (though it amused me enough to read it twice,) lest my lady Hervey should hear of it, who loves them both. I own I am much obliged to you for it, and you see you may trust my discretion.

Lady Holland has charged me to say a thousand civil things to you for her and my Lord, who is not yet come to town. She is as much enchanted with you as I am with Caligula. The town will insist that my Lord Holland was sent for to give advice for forming a new ministry. I wish he were, for your sake. Your other protector,* whom I mentioned in my last, is in great disgrace; has been thoroughly chid, was not spoken to at a great review on Monday in the face of all England, and, they say, is to go on a pilgrimage with his sister to Spa.

Nothing has happened since my last; but the crisis approaches—I was going to say, fast; but there are so many difficulties on all sides that I think nothing can be settled quickly. I don't like the hue so well as I did. I don't know whether it was not the very night I wrote to you that there was a majority but of three in the House of Lords. I should not mind that if it frightened nobody more than it does me. The times are very interesting now, while things are yet in agitation; and yet they will appear most inconsiderable hereafter. Neither the actors nor the actions are great,—and yet I could foresee great consequences, according as the scenes shall be shifted; but I think the whole more likely to subside into trifling and instability. We are nothing but factions, and those factions have very limited views. There is not a man but George Grenville who has any deep views. He is capable of any extremities; but he had rather be very bad *for* the Court than *against* it. Adieu!

LETTER CVII.

Arlington Street, June 30, 1767.

Well! at last, this long session is finished, and the Parliament rises to-morrow. I have been so uncertain what to write, that I have not written to you for a month. I can now tell you but one point affirmatively: Mr. Conway does quit. It is unlucky; bad for the public, disadvantageous for himself, distressing to the King; but he had promised his late friends. I call them *late*, for they have by no means shown themselves so this winter, nor are half grateful

* The Duke of York.

enough for such a sacrifice. He might be Minister: he retires with nothing.

They have bowed to idols, have been led by that old heathen, the Duke of Newcastle, towards the Bedfords, and have almost sacrificed even to Grenville. Well! what is to follow? I am sure I don't know. There has been a dabbling with the Bedfords, to detach them from Grenville,—they refused; and yet I believe are still hankering. The pretensions of the last Ministers are as high as if they had any pretensions; and yet they make a show of stickling for the other opposition too. This cannot on either part be granted. The Court, too, is so strong, that it cannot be taken by storm; and even this last week, though the Government is in a manner known to be dissolved, the majority has been very triumphant. The House of Lords has sat day after day, and night after night, on the Dividend Bill, and yet all Lord Mansfield's abilities have been baffled. I should rather think some Administration would be patched up from promiscuous quarters which may weather the next session, and when a new Parliament is chosen, the King may have what Ministers he pleases. In a week, perhaps, I may be able to be more informing; at present all is in suspense.

I do not wonder your great Duchess wonders that her dogs are not arrived, and you must wonder too; yet I am not to blame. I cannot get such a thing of the smallness and beauty you require. Lord Dacre's bitch disappointed me by a miscarriage. I have been at the repositories where they are sold, yet could find but one, and that was tanned, and too large. When Madame de Mirepoix was here, I teazed all my acquaintance for two. After six months I got them, and she sent them back the next morning, saying they were too large. I am called away and must finish: you shall hear the moment that any thing is settled. Adieu!

LETTER CVIII.

Strawberry Hill, July 20th, 1767.

You have heard enough, even in the late reign, of our *interministeriums*, not to be surprised that the present lasts so long. I am not writing now to tell you it is at an end; but I thought you might grow impatient.

The Parliament was scarcely separated when a negotiation was begun with the Bedfords, through Lord Gower; with a view to strengthen the remains of Administration by that faction, but with no intention of including George Grenville, who is more hated at Court than he is even in other places. After some treaty, Lord Gower, much against his will, I believe, was forced to bring word, that there was no objection made by his friends to the Treasury remaining in the Duke of Grafton; that Grenville would support without a place; but Lord Temple (who the duce thought of Lord Temple?) insisted on equal

power, as he had demanded with Lord Chatham. There was an end of that treaty! Another was then begun with Lord Rockingham. He pleaded want of strength in his party,—and he might have pleaded almost every other want—and asked if he might talk to the Bedfords. Yes! he might talk to whom he pleased, but the King insisted on keeping the Chancellor,—"and me," said the Duke of Grafton; but added, that for himself, he was very willing to cede the Treasury to his lordship. Away goes the marquis to Woburn; and, to charm the King more, negotiates with both Grenvilles too. These last, who had demanded every thing of the Crown, were all submission to the marquis; and yet could not dupe him so fast as he tried to be duped. Oh! all, all were ready to stay out, or turn their friends in, or what he pleased. He took this for his own talents in negotiation, came back highly pleased, and notified his success. The Duke of Grafton wrote to him that the King meant they should come in, *to extend and strengthen his Administration.* Too elated with his imaginary power, the marquis returned an answer, insolently civil to the duke, and not commonly decent for the place it was to be carried to. It said, that his lordship had laid it down for a principle of the treaty, that the present Administration was at an end. That supposed, *he* was ready to *form* a comprehensive Ministry, but first must talk to the King.

Instead of such an answer as such a *remonstrance* deserved, a very prudent reply was made. The King approved the idea of a comprehensive Administration: he desired to unite the hearts of *all* his subjects: he meant to exclude men of no denomination attached to his person and government; it was such a ministry that *he* intended to *appoint.* When his lordship should have *formed a plan* on such views, his Majesty would be ready to receive it from him. The great statesman was wofully puzzled on receiving this message. However, he has summoned his new allies to assist in composing a scheme or list. When they will bring it, how they will bring it formed, or whether they will ever bring it, the Lord knows. There the matter rests at present. If the marquis does not alter his tone, he sinks for ever, and from being the head of a separate band, he must fall into the train of Grenville, the man whom he and his friends opposed on all the arbitrary acts of that Ministry, and whom they have irremissibly offended by repealing his darling Stamp-act. *Apropos,* America is pacified, and the two factions cannot join to fish in troubled waters, there, at least.

Lord Clive is arrived, has brought a million for himself, two diamond drops worth twelve thousand pounds for the Queen, a scimitar, dagger, and other matters, covered with brilliants, for the King, and worth twenty-four thousand more. These *baubles* are presents from the deposed and imprisoned Mogul, whose poverty can still afford to give such bribes. Lord Clive refused some overplus, and gave it to some widows of officers; it amounted to ninety thousand pounds. He has *reduced* the appointments of the Governor of Bengal to thirty-two thousand pounds a-year; and, what is better, has left such a

chain of forts and distribution of troops as will entirely secure possession of the country—till we lose it. Thus having composed the eastern and western worlds, we are at leisure to kick and cuff for our own little island, which is great satisfaction; and I don't doubt but my Lord Temple hopes that we shall be so far engaged before France and Spain are ripe to meddle with us, that when they do come, they will not be able to reunite us.

Don't let me forget to tell you, that of all the friends you have shot flying, there is no one whose friendship for you is so little dead as Lord Hilsborough's. He spoke to me earnestly about your riband the other day, and said he had pressed to have it given to you. Write and thank him. You have missed one by Lord Clive's returning alive, unless he should give a hamper of diamonds for the Garter.

Well! I have remembered every point but one—and see how he is forgotten! Lord Chatham! He was pressed to come forth and set the Administration on its legs again. He pleaded total incapacity; grew worse and grows better. Oh! how he ought to dread recovering!

Mr. Conway resigns the day after to-morrow. I hope in a week to tell you something more positive than the uncertainties in this letter. Good night.

LETTER CIX.

Arlington Street, July 31st, 1767.

The clouds disperse; but there have been dark moments. The very day on which I wrote to you last was critical. A meeting of the two factions was held at Newcastle House, where the Duke of Bedford was agent for the Grenvilles; and the old wretch himself laboured tooth and nail, that is, with the one of each sort that he has left, to cement, or rather, to make over his friends to the same influence. But to no purpose; passion reigned, and a quarrel soon ensued. Grenville had commissioned his proxy to demand declarations against America, whence, though every thing is pacified, his pride required a hecatomb of victims. This was not yielded; nor all the places under the government, to glut the rapaciousness of the Bedford crew. The latter, too, formally protested against Mr. Conway's leading the House of Commons, which Lord Rockingham's interest and necessity called for, and which could not be waved, as Mr. Conway's resignation was a sacrifice to that party. The meeting broke up in very bad terms: yet the Duke of Bedford, as if sensible of his folly, begged another the next night; and as if insensible of his folly, repeated it, and clinched the quarrel. Hallelujah! What had Grenville to do but to let the present Administration be dissolved? He could never have wanted occasion to break with Lord Rockingham again.

On the Wednesday Lord Rockingham asked an audience—as every body did, and must think to offer his services. But common sense is a fool when it expects fools to act with common sense. The marquis behaved sillily, and impertinently, and *then* wondered he was not pressed to accept. Great offence was taken at his behaviour; and yet there was coolness and prudence enough left to permit another offer to be made. This condescension did the business. The weak man took it for weakness, and thinking that he should force more and more, lost all. In short he refused—and then Mr. Conway found himself at liberty. He and the Duke of Grafton have jointly undertaken the Administration, which was strong enough before, and now will be fortified by the contempt the world must have for both factions, who did not know how to make use of a moment which so many strange events had put into their hands.

The system, or rather arrangement, is not yet quite settled; but when one knows what is trumps, it is not difficult to play the game. I have not liked an hour so well as the present since Lord Chatham fell ill. He remains as he was, in place, no minister, and with little hopes of recovering.

I have been very unfortunate in the death of my Lady Suffolk,* who was the only sensible friend I had at Strawberry. Though she was seventy-nine, her senses were in the highest perfection, and her memory wonderful, as it was as accurate on recent events as on the most distant. Her hearing had been impaired above forty years, and was the only defect that prevented her conversation from not being as agreeable as possible. She had seen, known, and remembered so much that I was very seldom not eager to hear. She was a sincere and unalterable friend, very calm, judicious, and zealous. Her integrity and goodness had secured the continuation of respect, and no fallen favourite had ever experienced neglect less. Her fortune, which had never been nearly so great as it was believed, of late years was so diminished, as to have brought her into great difficulties. Yet they were not even suspected, for she had a patience and command of herself that prevented her ever complaining of either fortune or illness. No mortal but Lord Chetwynd† and I were acquainted with her real situation. I sat with her two hours on Saturday night, and though I knew that she was ill, and found her much changed, did not suspect her danger so great. The next evening she was better; and retiring to her chamber to supper with Lord Chetwynd, she pressed her hand suddenly to her side and expired in half an hour. I believe she left Marble Hill to Lord Buckingham,‡ and what else she had to Miss Hotham:§ at least I guess

* Henrietta, daughter of Sir Henry Hobart, first married to —— Howard, Earl of Suffolk, and afterwards to George Berkeley, brother of the Earl of Berkeley. During the life of her first husband she was mistress of King George II., Woman of the Bed-chamber, and afterwards Mistress of the Robes to Queen Caroline. She is often mentioned by Pope and Swift.

† William, Viscount Chetwynd, a great friend of Lord Bolingbroke.

‡ John Hobart, second Earl of Buckinghamshire, nephew of Lady Suffolk.

§ Henrietta, only child of Sir Charles Hotham Thompson, by Dorothy, only daughter of Sir John Hobart first Earl of Buckingham, brother of Lady Suffolk.

so from what I have heard her say, for I have not yet been told her will. I think now of going for a few weeks to Paris: my autumns will not be nearly so pleasant, from the loss I have mentioned. Adieu!

LETTER CX.

Arlington Street, Aug. 18, 1767.

It is odd to take leave because we are coming nearer to one another, but I remember the last time I was at Paris how difficult it was for you to get my letters thence; and therefore as I shall not stay above a month or six weeks at most, I do not know whether I shall attempt to write to you. I can have little or nothing material to tell you. Your best way, if you have any thing to say, will be to direct your letters to England, whence I shall receive them safely in four days.

Every thing is settled here; Lord Bristol,* has given up Ireland, content with fourteen or fifteen thousand pounds, with having made his brother† a bishop, and his brother-in-law,‡ Phipps, an Irish baron, and not willing to expose himself to the torrents of abuse that were prepared for him. I should not say content, for he already seems to sigh after his robes and guards. Lord Townshend§ is overjoyed to succeed him, and has ceded the Lieutenancy of the Ordnance to Mr. Conway, and takes Lady Ailesbury's brother, Lord Frederick Campbell for his secretary. I do not know how the Irish will relish a Scot. Lord Townshend will impose upon them at first, as he has on the world; will please them by a joviality, and then grow sullen and quarrel with them. His brother Charles remains Chancellor of the Exchequer, will impose on nobody; though he will try to impose on every body; will please, offend, lower his character, if possible, but will neither be out of humour himself nor let any body else be so. Lord Rockingham will declare against Opposition, and will oppose; and the Duke of Newcastle, and their disgusts, will reconcile Lord Rockingham and the Bedfords. The latter will be violent, and George Grenville damp their fire by talking them to death, in order to blow it up. Lord Temple will call himself head of the Opposition, and will only do all the dirty work of it.

The Duke of York, we are told, has succeeded very well at Paris. I shall know more certainly in a few days. It is undoubted that that court has taken great pains to honour and please him.

It is not from any hurry that I finish my letter so soon; but politics

* George William Hervey, second Earl of Bristol.

† Frederick, afterwards Earl of Bristol.

‡ Created Lord Mulgrave; he married Lepelle, eldest daughter of John Lord Hervey.

§ George, Viscount Townshend.

are subsided, and the town is a desert. I am here preparing for my journey, and have come home these two nights at ten o'clock, from having nowhere to go. It will be different at Paris, where one does not begin to go till nine. You will think me a strange man to leave England when I had just fixed every thing here to my mind; but I hate politics, and am glad to pass a month without hearing of them. Nature, that gave me a statesman's head, forgot to give me ambition or interestedness; and, if I had never been contradicted, I should have been as trifling as a king. Adieu!

LETTER CXI.

Paris, September 27, 1767.

Since you insist upon my writing from hence, I will; I intended to defer it a few days longer, as I shall set out on my return this day se'nnight.

Within the five weeks of my being here, there have happened three deaths, which certainly nobody expected six weeks ago. Yet, though the persons were all considerable, their loss will make little impression on the state of any affairs.

Monsieur de Guerchy returned from his embassy with us about a month before my arrival. He had been out of order some time, and had taken waters, yet seeing him so often I had perceived no change, till I was made to remark it, and then I did not think it considerable. On my arrival, I was shocked at the precipitate alteration. He was emaciated, yellow, and scarcely able to support himself. A fever came on in ten days, mortification ensued, and carried him off. It is said that he had concealed and tampered indiscreetly with an old complaint, acquired before his marriage. This was his radical death; I doubt, vexation and disappointment fermented the wound. Instead of the duchy he hoped, his reception was freezing. He was a frank, gallant gentleman; universally beloved with us; hated I believe by nobody, and by no means inferior in understanding to many who affected to despise his abilities.

But our comet is set too! Charles Townshend is dead. All those parts and fire are extinguished; those volatile salts are evaporated; that first eloquence of the world is dumb! that duplicity is fixed, that cowardice terminated heroically. He joked on death as naturally as he used to do on the living, and not with the affectation of philosophers, who wind up their works with sayings which they hope to have remembered. With a robust person, he had always a menacing constitution. He had had a fever the whole summer, recovered as it was thought, relapsed, was neglected, and it turned to an incurable putrid fever.

The Opposition expected that the loss of this essential pin would loosen the whole frame; but it had been hard, if both his life and death were to be pernicious to the Administration. He had engaged

to betray the latter to the former, as I knew early, and as Lord Mansfield has since declared. I therefore could not think the loss of him a misfortune. His seals were immediately offered to Lord North,* who declined them. The Opposition rejoiced; but they ought to have been better acquainted with one educated in their own school. Lord North has since accepted the seals—and the reversion of his father's pension.

While that eccentric genius, Charles Townshend, whom no system could contain, is whirled out of existence, our more artificial meteor, Lord Chatham, seems to be wheeling back to the sphere of business—at least his health is declared to be re-established; but he has lost his adorers, the mob, and I doubt the wise men will not travel after his light.

You, my dear sir, will be most concerned for the poor Duke of York, who has ended his silly, good-humoured, troublesome career, in a piteous manner. He had come to the camp at Compiegne without his brother's approbation, but had been received here not only with every proper mark of distinction, but with the utmost kindness. He had succeeded, too, was attentive, civil, obliging, lively, pleased, and very happy in his replies. Charmed with a Court so lively in comparison of the monastic scene at home, he had promised to return for Fontainebleau, and then scampered away as fast as he could ride or drive all round the South of France, intending to visit a lady at Genoa, with whom he was in love, whenever he had a minute's time. The Duc de Villars gave him a ball at his country house, between Aix and Marseilles; the Duke of York danced at it all night as hard as if it made part of his road, and then in a violent sweat, and without changing his linen, got into his postchaise. At Marseilles the scene changed. He arrived in a fever, and found among his letters, which he had ordered to meet him there, one from the King his brother, forbidding him to go to Compeigne, by the advice of the Hereditary Prince. He was struck with this letter, which he had ignorantly disobeyed, and by the same ignorance had not answered. He proceeded, however, on his journey, but grew so ill that his gentlemen carried him to Monaco, where he arrived on the third, and languished with great suffering until the seventeenth. He behaved with the most perfect tranquillity and courage, made a short will, and the day before he died dictated to Colonel St. John,† a letter to the King, in which he begged his forgiveness for every instance in which he had offended him, and entreated his favour to his servants. He would have particularly recommended St. John, but the young man said handsomely, "Sir, if the letter were written by your Royal Highness yourself, it would be most kind to me; but I cannot name myself." The Prince of Monaco, who happened to be on the spot, was unbounded in his attentions to him, both of care and honours; and visited him every hour till the duke grew too weak

* Frederick Lord North, who was afterwards First Minister.

† Henry, brother of Frederick, Viscount Bolingbroke, and Groom of the Bed-chamber to Edward Duke of York.

to see him. Two days before he died the duke sent for the prince, and thanked him; the prince burst into tears and could not speak, and retiring, begged the duke's officers to prevent his being sent for again, for the shock was too great. They made as magnificent a coffin and pall for him as the time and place would admit, and in the evening of the seventeenth the body was embarked on board an English ship, which received the corpse with military honours, the cannon of the town saluting it with the same discharge as is paid to a marshal of France. St. John and Morrison embarked with the body, and Colonel Wrottesley* passed through here with the news. The poor lad was in tears the whole time he stayed.

I shall beg Madame de Barbantane to trouble herself with this letter; I must ask this favour by a note, for I do not visit her; during my last journey I once or twice supped in company with her, but without much acquaintance. She is now in a convent with Mademoiselle the Duke of Orleans' daughter;† and Madame de Boufflers is at Lisle-Adam, and will not return to Paris before I am set out.

Lord Holland is expected here at the beginning of October. I have no doubt of his obtaining his earldom, but it will not be given before the end of next session. It is true I believe that Lord Carlisle, who is now here, will receive the green riband from the hands of the King of Sardinia. If Lord Cowper goes to England, he may undoubtedly secure the promise of the next; and Lord Warwick is in a bad state of health; but they never give green ribands to more than two English at a time. I am sorry that being at Florence, should be made a reason against bestowing ribands—I trust it will not remain so.

You tell me of the French playing at whist; why, I found it established when I was last here. I told them they were very good to imitate us in any thing, but that they had adopted the two dullest things we have, whist and Richardson's novels.

So you and the Pope are going to have the Emperor! Times are a little altered; no Guelphs and Ghibellines now. I do not think the Cæsar of the day will hold his Holiness's stirrup while he mounts his palfrey. Adieu!

LETTER CXII.

Strawberry Hill, October 29, 1767.

I HAVE been returned from Paris above a fortnight, but I found every thing here so profoundly quiet that all the news of England would not furnish a paragraph. The Ministers are firmly seated, and

* Afterwards Sir John Wrottesley, another of the Duke of York's Grooms of the Bed-chamber.

† Afterwards married to the Duc de Bourbon eldest son of the Prince de Condé, and mother to the unfortunate Duc d'Enghien.—En.

Opposition scarcely barks; at least, keeps its throat for the opening of Parliament. Lord Chatham is given out to be much better, and will, we are told, re-appear upon the stage. The rage of elections is so great, and so enormously expensive, that I should not think the session would be much attended. There is no popular cry in the counties, or, if any, it is against General Warrants, and the authors of them.

Mr. Conway has acted nobly, and refused the emoluments of Secretary of State, which amount to above five thousand pounds a-year, contenting himself with the profits of Lieutenant-General of the Ordnance, which do not exceed eleven hundred, and waiting for a regiment. This moderation is ill matter for an Opposition.

General Pulteney is dead, having owned himself worth a million, the fruits of his brother's virtures!* He has left an hundred and fifty thousand pounds to Lord Darlington,† and three hundred a-year to each of his two brothers; four hundred a-year only to Colman, Lady Bath's nephew, whom Lord Bath had recommended to him for the Bradford estate, but the old general was angry with Colman, for having entered into the management of the theatre in Covent Garden; and had told him he would not leave his estate to an actor. All the vast rest, except a few very trifling legacies, he leaves to his cousin Mrs. Pulteney, a very worthy woman, who had risked all by marrying one Johnstone, the third son of a poor Scot, but who is an orator at the India House, and likely to make a figure now in what *house* he pleases. She has one daughter, and is with child, but is fat, and not young. If she dies without children, the whole goes to Lord Darlington; but I think Mr. Johnstone Pulteney will try every method to be a nabob before that happens. The real nabob, Lord Clive, is reckoned in a very precarious state of health. Lord Holland is set out for Nice, much recovered before he went. Well! I have exhausted the mines of both Indies, and have nothing more to tell you, nor shall have probably before the Parliament meets. Adieu!

P.S. Oh! your poor young Queen of Naples, who has got the small pox, and will lose her beauty, if not her life! How much stronger superstition and prejudice are than maternal love, when all these deaths cannot open the Empress-Queen's eyes in favour of inoculation! But she has escaped herself, and that will close them faster than ever.

November, 1st.

I must contradict much of what I have been writing: the Duke of York's body is arrived, and your young Queen is dead. You gave the former very good advice. He would not have taken it, for I believe one seldom acts in health as one wishes or intends to do when one is at the point of death. The letter was not, as I told you addressed to the King, but to the Duke of Gloucester, to be shown to

* William Pulteney, Earl of Bath.

† Henry Vane, second Earl of Darlington, whose grandmother, the Duchess of Cleveland, was a Pulteney, and aunt of Lord Bath.

him. As I am making all sorts of *amendes honorables*, I must do justice to Lord North, who has no pension, as I heard at Paris.

I wonder all the Princes of Europe are not frightened *into* their wits—why, they die every day! and might avoid it most of them, by being inoculated. Mr. Sutton would ensure them at twelve-pence a head. He inoculates whole counties, and it does not cause the least interruption to their business. They work in the fields, or go up to their middles in water as usual. It is silly to die of such an old-fashioned distemper!

Monday, 3d.

The Queen was brought to bed yesterday, of a fourth Prince. Good night! I have scarce time to save the post.

LETTER CXIII.

Arlington Street, December 2nd, 1767.

Ce qui est differé, n'est point perdu. Though the Parliament has been met a week, and I have not opened my pen's lips, you will have amends made you for your impatience. We are triumphant beyond the paltry wisdom of calculation. We do not stoop to the detail of divisions to judge of our strength. Two Oppositions, that tread hard upon the heels of a majority, are the best secret in the world for composing a ridiculous minority. In short, Lord Rockingham's and the Duke of Bedford's parties, who could not have failed to quarrel if they had come into place together, are determined at least to have their quarrel, if they cannot have their places. On the first day, the centurians of the former were very warm, but having nothing to complain of but the bad weather and the price of corn, the Ministers had very little trouble. George Grenville, to show that he would not support the Rockinghams, did not speak till the question was passed; and then was wonderfully placid. Next day, he and Dowdswell squabbled for two hours, on their different creeds for America: the House laughed at both, and the Ministers kept their countenance: but the Bedfords were angry, or glad to be angry with Grenville. Two days afterwards, the Duke of Newcastle, who had rather make peace than not make mischief, scuttled to Bedford House, and tried to unite the two factions, but could scarcely obtain to be heard; and is gone to whisper any body that will be whispered at Bath. However, if he has but three dependents left upon earth, and can make two of them wait in his ante-chamber while he affects to be locked up with the third, he will be satisfied. Lord Temple and Lord Lyttleton are driving about the town with long speeches, which nobody cares to hear. The latter is a very beacon, to warn folks not to come near the party he belongs to, which is always the wrong. The Rockinghams, who have no rea-

son to be angry with any body but themselves, which nobody likes to be, do not know with whom to be most angry. George Grenville is distracted that the Ministers will not make America rebel, that he may be minister and cut America's throat, or have his own throat cut; and every body else, I suppose, will get places as soon as they can. My Lord Chatham is still at Bath. If all had been quite confusion, perhaps he might have come forth again—faith! as all will be quite peace, I do not know whether he may not still come. This is the state of our Vesuvius: though the lava has done running, the grumblings have not entirely ceased.

The Duke of Bedford is to be couched on Saturday for cataracts in both eyes. This is all our public and private news, except the divorce of Lord and Lady Bolingbroke, which is determined; and by consent of her family, she is to marry Mr. Beauclerc, the hero of the piece.

Should any thing happen before Friday, I shall have two days to write it; if not, as Brutus and Cassius, or some such persons as you and I, say,

This parting was well made.

Friday, 4th.

Brother Brutus, I do not know a word more. Every thing remains quiet in the senate. Adieu!

LETTER CXIV.

Arlington Street, Dec. 14th, 1767.

I HAVE received your letter, of the 21st of November, just as I was going to write to you. The volumes of Herculaneum came to me safe three days ago, for which I give you many thanks.

I must now prepare you for a new public scene. The obstinacy of George Grenville, who, on the first day of the session, would not act with the Rockingham faction, and who openly quarrelled with the second, disgusted his own friends, or gave them a handle for being disgusted. The Duke of Bedford sent for him, and told him that he himself was weary of opposition, and his friends more so; and therefore desired that each squadron might be at liberty *to provide* for themselves. Would not one think they were starving? After this *decent* declaration, his Grace sent to lay himself and *his friends* at the Duke of Grafton's feet, begging, as alms, that they might leave some of the first and best places under the Government. What heart is hard enough to resist so moving a petition? Well! I believe it will be granted: it breaks opposition to pieces; and surely these good folks will not be formidable, from their characters at least. This, I think, will be the arrangement: Lord Gower, President of the

Council,—it is a drunken place by prescription; Lord Granville had it, and Lord Northington has. Lord Weymouth, Secretary of State. I do not know yet, but probably shall before the post goes out, whether Lord Shelburne will keep America, or go out angrily, as he certainly is not over-well treated. If he resigns, Lord Hilsborough will be Secretary for America, and Lord Sandwich, Postmaster. Mr. Rigby will take any thing he can get, and better it as soon as he can. The rest are too insignificant, whether they are taken or wait.

The flower of this whole negotiation is, that it is not six months since the Duke of Bedford objected to Mr. Conway, as improper for leader of the House of Commons, and now stoops to place his people under him; nay, they have owned there is nobody so proper. This is triumph enough, and all I care about the matter; nay, and all I shall say about it, and more than you must say; for by the end of the week I suppose Lord Weymouth will be your master, and there is none of the set but must think opening a letter is innocence compared with any thing else they have done. You will not wonder, therefore, if I become more reserved for the future—at least for some time; for though the Court will take them, I shrewdly suspect that they do not intend to keep them long. For my part, I am perfectly indifferent whether they do or not, as my resolution was taken, when I declined coming into Parliament again, to have nothing more to do with politics for the rest of my life; and I am not apt to break my resolutions. I cannot, like the Duke of Newcastle, sail through life with generation after generation; and I am sick of the present. I have seen them in all shapes, and know them thoroughly; and unless I receive new provocations from any set, I prefer none to the other. In truth, I do not know whether the Bedfords are not the best, as they have not shame enough to be hypocrites.

So your King of Naples is a madman, or an idiot! and they set aside his eldest brother on the same pretence, to make room for him! Poor North, and poor South! The devil at Petersburgh, and a lunatic at Naples! Give me the bedlamite: one cannot be angry with Vesuvius for boiling over one, but one hates to be strangled by Lucifer, and then hear him lay it on God* himself. Yet, Voltaire and the French philosophers can find charms in such a character! 'Tis a precious world and one must be mad too, to do any thing but laugh at it. Adieu!

LETTER CXV.

Arlington Street, Dec. 25, 1767.

I SEND you these few lines only as a sequel, or confirmation of my last. The treaty is concluded, and Lord Gower has actually kissed

* See the manifesto of the Czarina, on the death of her husband.

hands as Lord President, in the room of Lord Northington, who retires on a pension. Lord Shelburne keeps the Southern department, but Lord Hilsborough is Secretary of State for America, and Lord Sandwich is to be Postmaster. The most material alteration is, that Mr. Conway will, at the end of next month, quit the Seals, which he has long wished to do, but will remain Cabinet Counsellor, and acting Minister in the House of Commons: this the King, and the Duke of Grafton, both insist on. Lord Weymouth is to wait till then. Mr. Conway was desirous of quitting the minute he could, but it was thought right, that as the Duke of Bedford had objected to him in the summer, they should be forced to swallow this submission of coming in under him—and they have swallowed it—and nobody doubted but they would. They have swallowed Lord Shelburne too, to whom they objected next, when they could not help stooping to Mr. Conway, but this was likewise denied; and they have again submitted. The Duke of Marlborough was to have the Garter, but to defer it as long as possible, the vacant one was immediately given to the Duke of Cumberland; and two more must drop, before the Duke of Marlborough can obtain one; for this is only the second* instance in my memory, where a single one was given alone. The Bedfords are to have some other trifles.

In the moment of projection, we thought this whole arrangement would blow up. Lord Chatham arrived at Reading; but he has stopped at Mrs. George Pitt's† at Wandsworth-hill, and we hear no more of him.

Well! I once more breathe at liberty! I have done with politics, and in three months shall have done with Parliaments. I do not talk of retiring, for that would be a tie, and I should want to break it; but if I know myself at all, I shall take care how I embark again. It will not be for want of opportunity, for this arrangement, I think, will not hold to July; but I neither guess nor prophecy, especially not, when there will be any system that will last. How strange and precipitate our changes are! Two months ago I doubted whether the numbers and activity of the Opposition, might not shake the Administration. By the splitting of the Opposition into pieces, and by the treachery of one of those fragments, the Administration is more shattered than it could have been but by a decisive defeat. Truly we politicians see a great way! Well! I shall only laugh at the trade now. I was born in it, and have lived in it half a century; I do not admire it, I am overjoyed to quit it, and shall be very indifferent what happens to the business. Adieu!

* James, second Earl of Waldegrave, received a Garter alone, from George II., who gave it him to disappoint a cabel, in a moment not unlike that in the letter above.

† Penelope Atkins, wife of George Pitt, afterwards Lord Rivers; a very distant relation of Lord Chatham.

LETTER CXVI.

Strawberry Hill, Jan. 17, 1768.

THIS, I should think, my dear sir, would be but a short letter, since I have little or no news to tell you; for I hope my good will is no news to you. The moment I saw in the papers that Sir William Rowley was dead, I desired Mr. Conway to make every necessary representation of your claim to a red riband. He spoke to the Duke of Grafton, who met him half way, acknowledged your title, and said that there was nobody he wished more to serve; and yet there are circumstances I do not like. The King has lately given the late Duke of Cumberland's riband to his second son; and I know has said, "It had already had the effect he intended it; it was prodigious the number of considerable applications he had had since he had thus stamped the order with dignity." I do not know whence these applications are; but we change hands so often, that I shall not wonder if red ribands go in part of payment. I am very sorry for it, but you see I am ready to do more than I promised, and do not want to be put in mind. I could wish to have got this for you: I shall now be of little use to you. I have totally done with politics for ever, and favours are seldom obtained by people who neither do hurt nor good. Mr. Conway will resign this week, and Lord Weymouth will have the Seals. The latter is very good-natured, and, I think, will not be your enemy. Lord Chatham is said to have the gout in both feet.

Pho! I see I have begun my letter on the wrong side of the paper. Well! no matter. Sir William Rowley has left six thousand pounds a-year—to whom do you think?—to his great-grandson. To his son, who had not disobliged him, he gives but eight hundred a-year; the same to his grandson; all the rest to his grandson's heir, and the savings. It is rather leaving an opportunity to the Chancery to do a right thing, and set such an absurd will aside. Do not doubt it. The law makes no bones of wills. I have heard of a man who began his will thus: "This is my will, and I desire the Chancery will not make another for me." Oh! but it did. If the admiral has left his riband to somebody unborn, I hope the Chancery will give it to you in the mean time.

We have had most dreadful frost and snow, but they lasted not quite three weeks. Yet, though the weather is quite warm, and it has rained several times, there are opposition-lumps of ice lying about the streets, that cannot be prevailed upon to melt, and take their places in the kennel. You tell me you have had snow at Florence.

The Duke of Newcastle has been dying, but is out of danger. He says he will meddle no more with politics, and therefore I think I will not declare that I have done with them, for I am sure he will relapse to them, and I should hate to be like him.

Well! I may as well bid you good night, for I have nothing more

to say. If I hear any thing to-morrow, when I return to town, I shall have time enough to tell you, for my letter will not set out till next day. If nothing happens, I shall take no notice, but end here.

Tuesday, 19th.

I met Mr. Mackenzie this morning at Princess Amelia's. He took me aside and expressed the greatest solicitude about your riband. I told him what I had just done. He said he would himself tell the Duke of Grafton the share he had in it, and how long ago it had been promised to you. I gave him a thousand thanks, and told him I would this very evening let you know how much you are obliged to him. Write him a line, and say I had acquainted you with this mark of his friendship and remembrance.

LETTER CXVII.

Arlington Street, Feb. 26, 1768.

The House of Commons has been employed in ferretting out bribery and corruption, and punishing some borough-jobbers and the Corporation of Oxford, who rather deserved thanks for not having taken the money for themselves. Then we had a flaming bill proposed, equal to the self-denying Ordinance of last century; and, as if Satan himself had drawn it, the only result would have been perjury; but we had the grace not to swallow it. The Opposition picked up spirits and plumped up their minority; but pushing their advantages too warmly, they fell on a jovial parson who was supported by the Treasury, and accused by one old sinner much worse than himself, and so sitting till past one in the morning, the minority was again reduced to 39 against 155. This blow will probably put an end to the campaign and to the Parliament—a Parliament for ever memorable; but you will excuse me from writing their panegyric! Old Mr. Onslow, the last Speaker, did not live to see their exit; and when they meet, I believe he will not regret that he had nothing to do with them. His death was long, and dreadfully painful, but he supported his agony with great patience, dignity, good humour, and even good breeding.

Monsieur du Chatelet is at last arrived, and is to be very sumptuous and magnificent. The ambassadress, I believe, will not come till the autumn. Lord Cathcart has kissed hands for Russia, in the room of Sir George Macartney, who has married Lord Bute's second daughter, and is to be in Parliament.

We are drowning again for the second winter, and hear of nothing but floods and desolation: but, come! I will not look for such common news to fill up my letter, but tell you a short story, and bid you good night. Last Monday there was at court a sea-captain who had been made prisoner at Algiers. He was complaining how cruelly he had been used. They asked how? "Why," said he, "you see

I am not strong and could do no hard labour, and so they put me to hatch eggs;" but his greatest grievance was, that, when he had hatched a brood, they took away his chickens. Did you ever hear of a more tender-hearted old hen? I laughed till I cried. Adieu!

LETTER CXVIII.

Arlington Street, March 8, 1768.

Our and my last Parliament will be dissolved the day after to-morrow. I do not know a single syllable of other political news.

Mr. Conway and Lady Ailesbury have had a signal escape—I was going to say, but attended with shocking circumstances, but, as I was writing the preceding words, my footman is come in, and says the affair is discovered. In short, last Wednesday, they were waked at six in the morning with an alarm that the house was on fire. It was so; a new library, just finished, was in flames. Many of the books are destroyed, many damaged; pictures burnt, and some papers, and nine hundred pounds in Bank notes, gone; all appearances of a robbery attempted to be concealed by setting fire to the room in three places. Thus, the suspicion fell on a set of old and faithful servants. I now hear that the assassin is discovered, and is a servant of the Duke of Richmond. I know no more yet, Adieu! I must go and inquire; for they have been in miserable suspense, and the whole town has been blaming him and her, because they would not believe it could be done by their own servants.

LETTER CXIX.

Arlington Street, Thursday, March 31, 1768.

I have received your letter, with the extract of that from Mr. Mackenzie. I do not think any honours will be bestowed yet. The peerages are all postponed to an indefinite time. If you are in a violent hurry, you may petition the ghosts of your neighbours—Masaniello and the Gracchi. The spirit of one of them walks here; nay, I saw it go by my window yesterday, at noon, in a hackney chair.

Friday.

I was interrupted yesterday. The ghost is laid for a time in a red sea of port and claret. This spectre is the famous Wilkes. He appeared the moment the Parliament was dissolved. The Ministry despise him. He stood for the city of London, and was the last on the poll of seven candidates, none but the mob, and most of them without votes favouring him. He then offered himself to the county of Middlesex. The election came on last Monday. By five in the

morning a very large body of weavers, &c., took possession of Piccadilly, and the roads and turnpikes leading to Brentford, and would suffer nobody to pass without blue cockades, and papers inscribed "*No.* 45, *Wilkes and Liberty.*" They tore to pieces the coaches of Sir. W. Beauchamp Proctor, and Mr. Cooke, the other candidates, though the latter was not there, but in bed with the gout, and it was with difficulty that Sir William and Mr. Cooke's cousin got to Brentford. There, however, lest it should be declared a void election, Wilkes had the sense to keep every thing quiet. But, about five, Wilkes, being considerably a-head of the other two, his mob returned to town and behaved outrageously. They stopped every carriage, scratched and spoiled several with writing all over them "No. 45," pelted, threw dirt and stones, and forced every body to huzza for Wilkes. I did but cross Piccadilly at eight, in my coach with a French Monsieur d'Angeul, whom I was carrying to Lady Hertford's; they stopped us, and bid us huzza. I desired him to let down the glass on his side, but, as he was not alert they broke it to shatters. At night they insisted, in several streets, on houses being illuminated, and several Scotch refusing, had their windows broken. Another mob rose in the City, and Harley, the present mayor, being another Sir William Walworth, and having acted formerly and now with great spirit against Wilkes, and the Mansion-house not being illuminated, and he out of town, they broke every window, and tried to force their way into the house. The trained bands were sent for, but did not suffice. At last a party of guards, from the Tower, and some lights erected, dispersed the tumult. At one in the morning a riot began before Lord Bute's house, in Audley Street, though illuminated. They flung two large flints into Lady Bute's chamber, who was in bed, and broke every window in the house. Next morning, Wilkes and Cooke were returned members. The day was very quiet, but at night they rose again, and obliged almost every house in town to be lighted up, even the Duke of Cumberland's and Princess Amelia's. About one o'clock they marched to the Duchess of Hamilton's, in Argyle-buildings (Lord Lorn* being in Scotland.) She was obstinate, and would not illuminate, though with child, and, as they hope, of an heir to the family, and with the Duke her son,† and the rest of her children in the house. There is a small court and parapet wall before the house: they brought iron crows, tore down the gates, pulled up the pavement, and battered the house for three hours. They could not find the key of the back door, nor send for any assistance. The night before, they had obliged the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland to give them beer, and appear at the windows and drink Wilkes's health. They stopped and opened the coach of Count Seilern, the Austrian ambassador, who has made a formal complaint, on which the Council met on Wednesday night, and were going to issue a proclamation, but, hearing that all was quiet, and that only a few houses were illuminated in Leicester Fields

* John Campbell, Lord Lorn, eldest son of John, Duke of Argyll, and second husband of the celebrated beauty, Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess-Dowager of Hamilton.

† Duke of Hamilton, her son by her first husband.

from the terror of the inhabitants, a few constables were sent with orders to extinguish the lights, and not the smallest disorder has happened since. In short, it has ended like other election riots, and with not a quarter of the mischief that has been done in some other towns.

There are, however, difficulties to come. Wilkes has notified that he intends to surrender himself to his outlawry the beginning of next term, which comes on the 17th of this month. There is said to be a flaw in the proceedings, in which case his election will be good, though the King's Bench may fine or imprison him on his former sentence. In my own opinion, the House of Commons is the place where he can do the least hurt, for he is a wretched speaker, and will sink to contempt, like Admiral Vernon, who I remember just such an illuminated hero, with two birthdays in one year. You will say, he can write better than Vernon—true; and therefore his case is more desperate. Besides, Vernon was rich: Wilkes is undone; and, though he has had great support, his patrons will be sick of maintaining him. He must either sink to poverty and a jail, or commit new excesses, for which he will get knocked on the head. The Scotch are his implacable enemies to a man. A Rienzi* cannot stop: their histories are summed up in two words—a triumph and an assassination.

I must finish, for Lord Hertford is this moment come in, and insists on my dining with the Prince of Monaco, who is come over to thank the King for the presents his Majesty sent him on his kindness and attention to the late Duke of York. You shall hear the suite of the above histories, which I sit quietly and look at, having nothing more to do with the storm, and sick of politics, but as a spectator, while they pass over the stage of the world. Adieu!

LETTER CXX.

Strawberry Hill, April 23rd, 1768.

As Wednesday last was the great day of expectation when Mr. Wilkes was to, and did, make his appearance in the King's Bench, I ought to have told you the event by Friday's post; but, my dear sir, I could tell you no event; nor was I in my life ever so puzzled to translate law into so much sense as would form a narrative. Would not one think that on so common an event as an outlawry and surrender, it must be as well known in Westminster Hall what is to be done, as a schoolboy knows he is to be whipt if he plays truant? No such matter! All the great lawyers in England are now disputing in barbarous Latin and half English, whether Wilkes is Wilkes, whether he can surrender himself when he does surrender, with twenty more questions equally absurd, with which they have puzzled them-

* Nicolo Rienzi, a famous demagogue at Rome.

selves, and, by consequence, all England, and, by consequence, all Europe. There are, at least, two dozen French now writing from London to Paris, that the *capias ut legatum* was not taken out as it should have been, and that the *fiat* should have been issued, &c. Well, patience! Let us come to facts, if we cannot get at meaning.

On Wednesday, all precautions were taken to prevent riots. Westminster Hall was garrisoned by constables, and horse and foot guards were ready to support them.

Wilkes had applied to the Attorney-General for a writ of error against his outlawry, which the attorney had promised, as they say; but the night before had been overpersuaded by the Master of the Rolls not to sign the *fiat*. Wilkes appeared according to promise. The Attorney-General moves to commit him. Lord Mansfield and the judges of the King's Bench tell him the *capias ut legatum* should have been taken out, and, not having been, there was no such person as Mr. Wilkes before them; nay, that there was no such person, for, Mr. Wilkes, being an outlaw, an *utlegatus* does not exist in the eye of the law. However, this nonentity made a long speech, and abused the chief justice to his face, though, they say, with great trembling—and then—why then, one or two hallooed, and nobody answered, and Mr. Wilkes walked away, and the judges went home to dinner, and a great crowd, for there was a vast crowd, though no mobbing, retired.

This passed on Wednesday; it is now Saturday night. Several *capias* issued, and the Lord Mayor has turned out some of the Sheriff's officers, for not apprehending Wilkes. In short, some are afraid; more want to shift the unpopularity from their own shoulders to those of others; Wilkes does not resist, but rather shifts his quarters, not being impatient to have his cause tried when he is on the wrong side of a prison. The people are disposed to be angry, but do not know wherefore, and the Court had rather provocation was given than give it; and so it is a kind of defensive war, that I believe will end with little bloodshed. At least, hitherto, it is so uninteresting, that I should not have studied it so much, but to try to explain it to you, as at such a distance you might think it more considerable. As I shall be in town to-morrow, and my letter cannot go away till Tuesday, I will tell you if I hear any more, though I am heartily tired of this subject, and very indifferent about the hero.

Tuesday, 26th.

I am not a jot wiser than I was. Wilkes has certainly played at hide and seek, and is heartily sick of his personage, and would fain make his peace, having the sense to see that he must fall at last. There was a great crowd at Westminster to-day, expecting his appearance, but I do not know whether he came or not, for I have not been abroad, nor seen any body that could tell. *Ex quovis ligno fit Mercurius*, but not a Cromwell. Adieu!

LETTER CXXI.

Arlington Street, Thursday, May 12, 1768.

You sit very much at your ease, my dear sir, demanding ribands and settling the conveyance. We are a little more gravely employed. We are glad if we can keep our windows whole, or pass and repass unmolested. I call it reading history as one goes along the streets. Now we have a chapter of Clodius—now an episode of Prynne, and so on. I do not love to think what the second volume must be of a flourishing nation running riot. You have my text; now for the application.

Wilkes, on the twenty-seventh of last month, was committed to the King's Bench. The mob would not suffer him to be carried thither, but took off the horses of his hackney-coach and drew him through the city to Cornhill. He there persuaded them to disperse, and then stole to the prison and surrendered himself. Last Saturday his cause was to be heard, but his Counsel pleading against the validity of the outlawry, Lord Mansfield took time to consider, and adjourned the hearing till the beginning of next term, which is in June.

The day before yesterday the Parliament met. There have been constant crowds and mobbing at the prison, but, on Tuesday, they insisted on taking Wilkes out of prison and carrying him to Parliament. The tumult increased so fast, that the Riot-Act was read, the soldiers fired, and a young man was shot. The mob bore the body about the streets to excite more rage, and at night it went so far that four or five more persons were killed; and the uproar quashed, though they fired on the soldiers from the windows of houses. The partisans of Wilkes say the young man was running away, was pursued and killed; and the jury have brought it in wilful murder against the officer and men: so they must take their trials; and it makes their case very hard, and lays Government under great difficulties. On the other side, the young man is said to have been very riotous, and marked as such by the guards. But this is not all. We have independent mobs, that have nothing to do with Wilkes, and who only take advantage of so favourable a season. The dearness of provisions incites, the hope of increase of wages allures, and drink puts them in motion. The coal-heavers began, and it is well it is not a hard frost, for they have stopped all coals coming to town. The sawyers rose too, and at last the sailors, who have committed great outrages in merchant ships, and prevented them from sailing. I just touch the heads, which would make a great figure if dilated in Baker's Chronicle among the calamities at the end of a reign. The last mob, however, took an extraordinary turn; for many thousand sailors came to petition the Parliament yesterday, but in the most respectful and peaceable manner; desired only to have their grievances examined; if reasonable, redressed; if not reasonable, they would be

satisfied. Being told that their flags and colours with which they paraded were illegal, they cast them away. Nor was this all: they declared for the King and Parliament, and beat and drove away Wilkes's mob.

It is now Friday morning; every thing was quiet yesterday. Lord Suffolk moved the Lords to address the King to confer some mark of favour on the Lord Mayor Harley, for his active and spirited behaviour. The Duke of Grafton answered that it was intended; and the House were very zealous.

I wish with all my heart I may have no more to tell you of riots; not that I ever think them very serious things, but just to the persons on whom the storm bursts. But I pity poor creatures who are deluded to their fate, and fall by gin or faction, when they have not a real grievance to complain of, but what depends on the elements, or causes past remedy. I cannot bear to have the name of Liberty profaned to the destruction of the cause; for frantic tumults only lead to that terrible corrective, arbitrary power, which cowards call out for as protection, and knaves are so ready to grant.

I believe you will soon hear of the death of Princess Louisa,* who is in a deep consumption.

I am much obliged to Lord Stormont for his kind thoughts, and am glad you are together. You will be a comfort to him, and it must be very much so to you at this time, to have a rational man to talk with instead of old fools and young ones, boys and travelling governors. Adieu.

LETTER CXXII.

Strawberry-Hill, June 9, 1768.

To send you empty paragraphs when you expect and want news is tantalizing, is it not? Pray agree with me, and then you will allow that I have acted very kindly in not writing till I had something to tell you. *Something*, of course, means Wilkes, for every thing is nothing except the theme of the day. There has appeared a violent North Briton, addressed to, and written against Lord Mansfield, threatening a rebellion if he continued to persecute Mr. Wilkes. This paper, they say, Wilkes owned to the Chevalier de Chastelux, a French gentleman, who went to see him in the King's Bench, and knew him at Paris. A rebellion threatened in print is not very terrible. However, it was said that the paper was outrageous enough to furnish the law with every handle it could want. But modern mountains do not degenerate from their ancestors; their issue are still mice. You know, too, that this agrees with my system, that this is an age of abortions. Prosecutions were ordered against the publishers and venders, and there, I suppose, it will end.

* The King's sister.

Yesterday was fixed for the appearance of Wilkes in Westminster Hall. The judges went down by nine in the morning, but the mob had done breakfast still sooner, and was there before them; and as judges stuffed out with dignity and lamb-skins, are not absolute sprites, they had much ado to glide through the crowd. Wilkes's counsel argued against the outlawry, and then Lord Mansfield, in a speech of an hour and a half, set it aside; not on *their* reasons, but on grounds which he had discovered in it himself. I think they say it was on some flaw in the Christain name of the county, which should not have been *Middlesex to wit*,—but I protest I don't know, for I am here alone, and picked up my intelligence as I walked in our meadows by the river. You, who may be walking by the Arno, will, perhaps, thing there was some timidity in this; but the depths of the law are wonderful! So pray don't make any rash conclusions, but stay till you get better information.

Well! now he is gone to prison again,—I mean Wilkes; and on Tuesday he is to return to receive sentence on the old guilt of writing, as the Scotch* would *not* call it, *the* 45, though they call the rebellion so. The sentence may be imprisonment, fine, or pillory; but as I am still near the Thames, I do not think the latter will be chosen. Oh! but stay, he may plead against the indictment, and should there be an improper *Middlesex to wit* in that too, why then in that case, you know, he did *not* write *the* 45, and then he is as white as milk, and as free as air, and as good a member of Parliament as if he had never been expelled. In short, my dear sir, I am trying to explain to you what I literally do not understand; all I do know is, that Mr. Cooke, the other member for Middlesex, is just dead, and that we are going to have another Middlesex election, which is very unpleasant to me, who hate mobs so near as Brentford. Sergeant Glynn, Wilkes's counsel, is the candidate, and I suppose the only one, in the present humour of the people, who will care to have his brains dashed out, in order to sit in Parliament. In truth, this enthusiasm is confined to the very mob or little higher, and does not extend beyond the county. All other riots are ceased, except the little civil war between the sailors and coal-heavers, in which two or three lives are lost every week.

What is most disagreeable, even the Emperor of Morocco has taken courage on these tumults, and has dared to mutiny for increase of wages, like our journeymen tailors. France is pert too, and gives herself airs in the Mediterranean. Our Paolists were violent for support of Corsica, but I think they are a little startled on a report that the hero Paoli is like other patriots, and is gone to Versailles, for a peerage and pension. I was told to-day that at London there are murmurs of a war. I shall be sorry if it prove so. Deaths! suspense, say victory;—how end all our victories? In debts, and a wretched peace! Mad world, in the individual or the aggregate!

* The Scotch called the rebellion in 1715, "*the* 15," and that in 1745 "*the* 45."

Well! say I to myself, and what is all this to me? Have not I done with that world? Am not I here at peace, unconnected with courts and ministries, and indifferent who is minister? What is a war in Europe to me more than a war between the Turkish and Persian Emperors? True; yet self-love makes one love the nation one belongs to, and vanity makes one wish to have that nation glorious. Well! I have seen it so; I have seen its conquests spread farther than Roman eagles thought there was land. I have seen too the Pretender at Derby; and, therefore, you must know that I am content with historic seeing, and wish fame and history would be quiet and content without entertaining me with any more sights. We were down at Derby, we were up at both Indies; I have no curiosity for any intermediate sights.

Your brother was with me just before I came out of town, and spoke of you with great kindness, and accused himself of not writing to you, but protested it was from not knowing what to say to you about the riband. I engaged to write for him, so you must take this letter as from him too.

I hope there will be no war for some hero to take your honours out of your mouth, sword in hand. The first question I shall ask when I go to town will be, how my Lord Chatham does? I shall mind his health more than the stocks. The least symptom of a war will certainly cure him. Adieu! my dear sir.

LETTER CXXIII.

Strawberry Hill, June 22nd, 1768.

You will see in all the papers the sentence passed on Wilkes, which is severe enough, though not so strong as usual, it not having, I suppose, been thought prudent to add the pillory, though that disgrace would have ascertained the rejection of him from the House of Commons. He does intend to appeal to the House of Lords, but I doubt that is not just the court where he will find the easiest redress. In the meantime, his stock is much fallen. His sentence being rather passive than active, and exhibiting no spectacle, does not strike the mob with much compassion: they love to be shocked in order to be melted. The novelty, too, is over: though great pains were taken, and a thousand handbills dispersed to summon his constituents, the crowd was very small at his receiving sentence, with which he was much struck. Contributions hang off; in short, the holiday is over.

But there was a collateral reason which helped to put out this flame. The coal-heavers, who, by the way, are all Irish White-boys, after their battles with the sailors, turned themselves to general war, robbed in companies, and murdered wherever they came. This struck such a panic, that in Wapping nobody dared to venture abroad, and the city began to find no joke in such liberty. They cried out

for the guards, were transported to see them, and encouraged them to seize the coal-heavers,—for aldermen love the military when their neighbour, Alderman Ucalegon's* house is set on fire. This dangerous riot is quelled, and I hear that several of these banditti are to be tried and hanged immediately. You may be easy; I think we shall have no more tumults.

I am quite ignorant what is to be done about Corsica; it looks rather as if we should take no part: but I live here out of all politics, and am content if there is no war between my neighbours, the two Kings of Brentford.† If the monarchs round about you expel the Pope, I hope they will not send him hither, as they have done the Jesuits; for, wise as Europe thinks us, there is no folly of which Europe purges itself, which we are not ready to receive.

I have written to you so often lately, that you must excuse a short letter, which is but the epilogue to all I have been telling you before. As riots, events, revolutions, compose the gross of our correspondence, 'tis happy when we have little to say. The world would be more dull if it furnished no matter for history, but its felicity would be greater too. Adieu!

LETTER CXXIV.

Arlington Street, Aug. 4th, 1768.

Since our riots and tumults, I conclude you are glad when you do *not* hear from me; it is a symptom that we are tolerably quiet; for you can have no fear for me, who live out of the storm. It is true, our mobs are subsided;—several of the formidable coal-heavers are hanged. I intended to tell you the wonderful story of Green, who defended himself against them all for thirteen hours together, and killed eighteen or twenty; but you will see the trial at large in the papers. You will be charmed with his heroism, and with the courage and indifference of the sailor who shut himself up with him and assisted him, and stayed behind in the house coolly when Green was gone off. It is pretty astonishing, too, that a house should be besieged for thirteen hours together in the capital, and no notice taken of it, though a justice of peace passed by at the time! Well! but we have a worse riot, though a little farther off. Boston—not in Lincolnshire, though we have had a riot even there, but in New England, is almost in rebellion, and two regiments are ordered thither. Letters are come in, that say the other provinces disapprove; and even the soberer persons there. In truth, it is believed in the city that this tumult will be easily got the better of. Our navy, too, is in so very formidable plight, that our neighbours will not much care to interfere. It is tremendous the force we have in the river, at Plymouth and Portsmouth.

* Jam proximus ardet Ucalegon.

† The King and Wilkes.

We expect our cousin and brother of Denmark next week;—since he will travel, I hope, he will improve: I doubt there is room for it. He is much, I believe, of the stamp of many youths we have sent you; but with so much a better chance, that he has not a travelling tutor to make him more absurd than he would be of himself. Poor Denmark, if Oxford or Cambridge had furnished him with a governor!

We have lost our Pope. Canterbury* died yesterday. He had never been a Papist, but almost every thing else. Our Churchmen will not be Catholics; that stock seems quite fallen.

At last I have got two black puppies for your great duchess. They are as small as if I had bought them out of the fairy tales; and though I have had them a fortnight, I think they are rather grown smaller than increased. I have laid out by different channels for the first ship that goes to Leghorn, but as yet have not heard of one. Don't, therefore, drop a hint about them, lest they should arrive as slowly as your riband. They may die by the way, they may grow large or ugly, they may get the mange with salt provisions, &c. I will tell the captain that you will give him two guineas if they arrive safely, and if they do, and are beautiful, that the great duchess will give him her hand to kiss. In short, I will do my utmost that you may be content. I had not, you see, forgotten, but literally, these were the first I could procure. They are excessively scarce, especially when very small, as these promise to be; they are the merriest little mice imaginable; the bitch, the smaller of the two. Adieu! this commission was the chief purpose of my letter. Possibly you may hear again soon, if our royal visiter produces any thing worth repeating.

LETTER CXXV.

Arlington Street, Saturday, Aug. 13, 1768.

My impatience insists on writing to you to-night, though my letter cannot go till Tuesday. Mr. Mackenzie surprised and rejoiced me yesterday in the evening, by telling me that Sir John Dick† is to carry you the riband of the Bath, and is to carry it immediately. Mr. Mackenzie settled it with the Duke of Grafton, and said to me, "I would carry the riband myself rather than he should not have it." In truth, I never saw more earnest friendship; and I congratulate you that you had so powerful an intercessor. I, you see, could get nothing but promises!—but since you are content, I shall be so, for seldom does my satisfaction depend on favour and interest. What little I had I shun and relinquish every day, and get more and more out of the world as fast as I can. Death shall never find me at

* Dr. Secker.
† Consul at Genoa, and then at Leghorn.

a levée. Nor will he, I think, see me very unwilling to go with him, though I have no disappointments; but I came into the world so early, and have seen so much, that I am satisfied. While the comedy lasts, I sometimes go to it, but indifferent whether Lord Chatham or Garrick is on stage, and determined to meddle with the scuffles of no green-room.

The puppet of the day is the King of Denmark; in truth, puppet enough; a very miniature of our late King, his grandfather. White, strutting, dignified, prominent eyes, galant, and condescending enough to mark that it is condescension. He arrived the night before last, is lodged at St. James's, where he has levées, but goes and is to go every where, to Ranelagh, Vauxhall, Bath, the Lord knows whither, to France, to Italy; in short, is to live in a crowd for these two or three years, that he may learn mankind, by giving all mankind an opportunity of staring at him. Well! but he is not twenty, and is an absolute Prince: sure subjects are happy when absolute twenty only runs away from them! He was last night at my Lady Hertford's, having told my lord, who by his office* received him at St. James's, that having made his first acquaintance among the men with him, he would be acquainted among the ladies first with his wife. All the people of fashion that could be got together at this time of year, were there. He stayed near an hour, behaved very properly, and talked to the ministers and some of the ladies. His own Prime Minister, Bernsdorffe, is with him, a decent, sensible man; but there is a young favourite too, called Comte de Holke, who, poor lad! is quite intoxicated with his favour.

Apropos, did I tell you that Lord Bute is gone abroad, and, as his friends and the physicians say, never likely to return?—but he must die, before the generality will believe he is even ill. You should say something civil to Mr. Mackenzie on this chapter, and that you hope his brother is not so ill as report makes him; and that if he should think of Italy, you hope he will command your house.

Sunday.

The little King was last night at the Opera, and seemed extremely tired of it, though it was the Buona Figliuola, played by Lovatini and the Guadagni. He not only seems to have no ear, but not the least curiosity,† he took no notice of any thing, and was only occupied with acting Royalty, for his assumed principality of Travendahl‡ is scarce at all in question. His court behaves to him with Eastern submission. What would I have taken to be Bernsdorffe, bowing and cringing to him at every word in the face of a new and free nation! A grave old man, running round Europe after a chit, for the sake of domineering over a parcel of beggar Danes, when he himself is a Hanoverian, and might live at ease on an estate he has in Mecklenburgh!

* Of Lord Chamberlain.

† He was extremely short-sighted. Bernsdorffe owned to somebody "que c'étoit le secret d'état."

‡ As he travelled incognito, he took the title of Comte de Travendahl.

Bishop Cornwallis* is our new archbishop; a quiet, amiable, good sort of man; without the hypocrisy of his predecessor, or the abject soul of most of his brethren. He had a stroke of a palsy as long ago as when I was at Cambridge with him, the remaining appearances of which will keep up the hopes of our other cardinals.

There is a disagreeable affair at home, resulting from the disquiets in America. Virginia, though not the most mutinous, contains the best heads and the principal *boutes-feux*. It was thought necessary that the governor should reside there. It was known that Sir Jeffery Amherst would not like that: he must, besides, have superseded Gage.† At the same time, Lord Bottetourt,‡ a court favourite, yet ruined in fortune, was thought of by his friend Lord Hilsborough. This was mentioned to Sir Jeffery; with the offer of a pension. He boggled at the word *pension;* but neither cared to go to his government, nor seemed to dislike giving it up. On this, the new arrangement was too hastily made: Amherst refused the pension, and yesterday threw up his regiment too. His great merit and public services cast an ugly dye on this affair, though a necessary one. Both sides seem to have acted too hastily.

The black dogs are not yet set out; I cannot hear of a vessel going directly to Leghorn. I have written to your brother (with the news of the riband) to desire he will employ some of our people at the Custom House to lay out for the first ship. The dog grows a little; but, *sa future*, will lie in the palm of your hand. However, do not announce these black princes till you can introduce them at court. Adieu!

LETTER CXXVI.

Arlington Street, August 24, 1768.

The idle talk of nothing but the King of Denmark; and the wise, of Sir Jeffery Amherst. Princess Amelia made a superb ball, firework and supper, for the former last Friday, at her villa, Gunnersbury, at which I was. I do not tell you the particulars, because I think all those things are very much alike, and differ but in a few dishes or a few crackers, more or less. The poor little king is fatigued to death, and has got the belly-ache. He was to have set out on Monday to hear bad Latin verses at Cambridge, and to see the races at York, but is confined at St. James's.

Sir Jeffery, the newest saint in the Martyrology, has acted a little too like a saint. When he found his resignation gave great uneasiness to the Court, and that they were desirous of pacifying him, he

* Frederic, Bishop of Litchfield and brother of the first Earl Cornwallis.

† Brother of Lord Gage, and afterwards general at Boston in the beginning of the American war.

‡ Norbonne Berkeley, Lord Bottetourt, Groom of the Bed-chamber to George the Third.

made his bill and asked for an English peerage, an American one, if any should be made, and a grant of the coal-mines at Quebec, which may produce nobody knows what, twenty, thirty thousand pounds a-year. The Duke of Grafton told him that the King had been so teased for peerages, that his Majesty had forbidden him to mention any more requests of that sort; and, for the coal-mines, I do not believe that they are frightened enough to make him a present of such a royalty—so at present he remains without his regiment or his disinterestedness. I am sorry your brother knight demanded all these *tria juncta in uno*. Adieu!

LETTER CXXVII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 22, 1768.

I AM just returned hither from an expedition of visits and curiosity into Warwickshire, Yorkshire, and other counties. I stayed but one night in town, and could see nobody that could inform me whether Sir John Dick and your cap and feathers are set out, but I conclude so, and hope the first news from Florence will be a paragraph in the Gazette with an account of the Great Duke investing you. The black infants* I found were embarked, and I hope will have a prosperous voyage.

I can tell you nothing but what you will see in the papers, of the King of Denmark hurrying from one corner of England to the other, without seeing any thing distinctly, fatiguing himself, breaking his chaise, going tired to bed in inns, and getting up to show himself to the mob at the window. I believe that he is a very silly lad, but the mob adore him, though he has neither done nor said any thing worth repeating; but he gives them an opportunity of getting together, of staring, and of making foolish observations. Then the newspapers talk their own language, and call him *a great personage*; and a great personage that comes so often in their way, seems almost one of themselves raised to the throne. At the play of the "Provoked Wife," he clapped whenever there was a sentence against matrimony; a very civil proceeding, when his wife is an English princess! The other great personage has at last given him a ball; my Lord Mayor gives him another to-morrow, and he himself is to give a masquerade to all the world at Ranelagh. He asked the King's leave, who said he could refuse nothing to him; the bishops will call this *giving an earthquake*; but if they would come when bishops call, the Bishop of Rome would have fetched forty by this time. Our right reverend fathers have made but a bad choice of their weapon in such a cold damp climate; and yet they were in the right to fix on a sin that they cannot commit themselves. The little king has sent five

* The little black dogs Mr. Walpole had procured for Sir Horace Mann to present to the Grand Duchess of Tuscany.—Ed.

hundred tickets into the city; I don't know how many to Oxford, and to every body that has banqueted him. Between him and Sir Jeffery Amherst, poor Wilkes is entirely forgotten: but nobody should complain, for we take care to wear every subject threadbare.

The great war* between the Duke of Portland and Sir James Lowther is said to be compromised: it is certain that the latter is to be a viscount, which looks like his giving up the elections contested between them.

I have had such another misfortune as I had last year in poor Lady Suffolk. My Lady Hervey,† one of my great friends, died in my absence. She is a great loss to several persons; her house was one of the most agreeable in London; and her own friendliness, good breeding, and amiable temper, had attached all that knew her. Her sufferings, with the gout and rheumatism, were terrible, and yet never could affect her patience, or divert her attention to her friends.

LETTER CXXVIII.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 24, 1766.

I HAVE been confined these three weeks with the gout in both feet, and am still lying upon my couch; yet I must oblige myself to write you a few lines, as the resignation of Lord Chatham will have excited your curiosity. In truth, I am little able to satisfy it; for besides having entirely bidden adieu to politics, I am here, ten miles from town, which is a thousand miles from truth. To the King, I am told Lord Chatham pleaded want of health, and despair of it; but to the Duke of Grafton he complained of the treatment of Sir Jeffery Amherst, and the intended removal of Lord Shelburne—the last, an unwise measure of the last accession to the Administration. I do not see why want of health should have dictated this step more just now than that at any moment for this last year. It being timed too at the eve of the Parliament has a suspicious look. As I have always doubted of the reality of his disorder, this proceeding does not abate my suspicion, yet there is in this conduct as in all his preceding, something unaccountable. No reconciliation seems to have taken place with his family: he is as extravagantly profuse as ever, and I believe almost as much distressed. Lord Shelburne protested that he had not received the slightest intimation of Lord Chatham's intention, and yet has since resigned himself. The common report, for I really know nothing of the matter, is, that this nail started will not unpeg the Administration. Lord Rochford is Secretary of State, but Lord Weymouth goes into Lord Shelburne's province. Who is to be Privy Seal I do not know.

* An election contest. Sir James was not created a Peer at that time.

† Mary Lepelle, widow of John Lord Hervey, eldest son of the first Earl of Bristol, and mother of the three succeeding earls, George-William, Augustus, and Frederic.

We have rumours here that the rebuffs in Corsica have shaken the Duke of Choiseul's credit considerably, which tottered before by the King's apprehension of that invasion producing a war. Our newspapers have even disgraced the duke, and given him the Duke of Nivernois for successor; I do not wish them a more superficial minister than the latter. He is a namby-pamby kind of pedant, with a peevish *petite santé*, and much more fit to preside over one of your foolish Italian academies than to manage the affairs of a great kingdom.

Adieu! I write in such an uneasy posture that you will excuse my saying no more.

LETTER CXXIX.

Arlington Street, Nov. 3, 1768.

I WISH you joy on the consummation of your wishes, and am pleased with the honours showered on you. Mr. Conway did receive your letter, and is happy to have contributed to your satisfaction.

Lord Chatham, if one may judge by symptoms, is not only peaceable, but has reasan to be pleased. The Privy Seal is given to his friend Lord Bristol,* and not only the Chancellor,† but Mr. James Grenville remain in place; a complexion of circumstances that places Lord Shelburne in an awkward situation. Till to-day it was even believed that the latter's friend, Colonel Barré, would retain his place, but to day I hear that he will resign it. Lord Harcourt is likely to go ambassador to Paris, and they say Lord Charles Spencer is to succeed him as Chamberlain to the Queen. Colonel Fitzroy, the Duke of Grafton's brother, is made her Vice-Chamberlain;—a clear proof of the favour of the Duke.

The Parliament is to meet on Tuesday next; and a busy session it must be. The turbulent temper of Boston, of which you will see the full accounts in all the papers, is a disagreeable prospect. *Corsica* will not fail to be talked of, and the heat of the late elections must rekindle as the petitions come to be heard. How happy do I feel to be quite out of the whirlwind! How I should feel the remains of my gout if I knew that I was to be hurried down to the House of Commons! The town will not want even private amusement, which must pass too through the parliamentary channel. I mean the Duke of Grafton's divorce; an event I am very sorry for, as I wish well to both parties.

Are the Black Prince and Princess not arrived yet? I am impatient to hear of their landing, and to learn the present state of their charms. I am glad they are not parrots, and will not be able to

* George William Hervey, second Earl of Bristol of that family.
† Charles Pratt, Lord Camden.

jabber what they hear on shipboard, to the great scandal of an Austrian Court. Adieu!

LETTER CXXX.

Arlington Street, Nov. 18, 1768.

As there has been no event since the Parliament met, I did not write to you any account of it. Being happily quit of it, I do not burden my memory with inquiring into details. If any genius should arise, or promise to arise, one is sure enough of hearing it without curiosity. By the modesty of the Opposition, and by their little impatience for a division, it is plain they were conscious of the weakness of their numbers. From their conduct yesterday, it is certain that they have more weaknesses than one. They moved for all papers, with *all* powers, in which any mention has been made of Corsica. When the strength of a new Parliament is not known, methinks it were wise, by a plausible question to draw in as many of the lookers out, at least of the rational and the well-meaning, as possible. In lieu of that, they frame a question that required a very opponent stomach to digest. Accordingly, the motion was rejected by two hundred and thirty to eighty-four—and thus a fluctuating majority becomes a stable one—for every interested man will now be in a hurry to be the two hundred and thirty-first. It was a great day for the Administration, a better for the Duke of Choiseul, a bad one for this country; for whatever the Ministry may incline or wish to do, France will look on this vote as a decision not to quarrel for Corsica. She may determine to pursue a scheme she was ready to abandon; and we may be at last drawn in to save Corsica, when it might have been saved without our interfering.

The Duke of Newcastle* is dead, of a stroke of a palsy. He had given up politics ever since—his illness a few months ago! It does not make the least alteration of any kind.

So the Turks have opened their temple of Janus! To how many more temples it will communicate, who can tell? As France persuaded them to unlock it, no doubt she has false keys to other gates. The Duke of Choiseul totters; but sometimes our Administration props him, and sometimes our Opposition.

Lord Chatham has got a regular fit of the gout after so long an intermission. Many think this indicates his re-appearance. If any thing can re-produce him on the stage, the gout and the smell of war can. He might not like to make it while minister. There is nothing to check him, when out of place.

Adieu! for I have other letters to write, and am in haste to go out. I have seen with satisfaction your glories in the Gazette.

* Thomas Holles Pelham, Duke of Newcastle.

LETTER CXXXI.

Arlington Street, Nov. 25, 1768.

The young gentleman who will deliver this to you, is the son of Lord Kaimes,* a very learned and ingenious gentleman in Scotland, well known by his works. I have been desired to add my recommendation to these titles, though they want none; and though you want no incitement to be obliging and kind to your countrymen. It is indeed defrauding you of that merit, if I occasion the least part of it to be imputed to my solicitation. However, I know it is a pleasure to you to oblige me, and therefore I beg you will indulge your propensity; and you are sure I shall acknowledge your friendship, while you are pleasing yourself by exerting your good breeding and good offices in favour of this gentleman.

LETTER CXXXII.

Arlington Street, Sunday, Dec. 2, 1768.

The Middlesex election is to be on Thursday, and every management and every mismanagement has been used to make it produce more tumults. The House of Commons forgetting the day, ordered Wilkes to appear at their bar to day; and when they had granted that, he demanded to call Lord Temple, Lord Sandwick, and Lord March,† to be examined by him. As the demand was artfully made for the first singly, nobody cared and the House allowed it. Then he asked for the two others. When the first had been granted, there could be no pretence for refusing the others. The two have been in a horrid anxiety, concluding Lord Temple would desire to go; but yesterday, when the Commons sent to the Lords to ask leave for the appearance of all three, Lord Temple was not in the house, and, I hear, disclaims having had any connexion with Wilkes for some time. The Lords replied, they would return an answer by their own messengers; and have postponed the consideration to Monday. In the mean time they are beginning to exert themselves to prevent riots, and yesterday committed a solicitor to Newgate for prevarication, when he was examined for having prosecuted a justice of peace, who took up a rioter last spring by the orders of their House. The other

* Henry Home, the eminent Scottish Judge, well known for his writings on various subjects. Becoming a Judge of Session, he assumed, according to custom in Scotland, the title of Lord Kames. His writings were not confined to his own profession. Among other works, he published "Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion;" "An Introduction to the Art of Thinking," and "Sketches of the History of Man."—Ed.

† William Douglas Earl of March and Ruglen, afterwards Duke of Queensberry. He had encouraged Kidgell to inform against Wilkes's Essay on Woman.

House have also put off the appearance of Wilkes before them till after the Middlesex election. These steps do not look favourably for him.

In the mean time, new game is started. Lord Chatham is reconciled to Lord Temple and Mr. Grenville. Impatience longs to know whether the first will re-appear again. His friends say that he has a most favourable fit of the gout, and will certainly come forth after Christmas. Others, that this reconciliation was patched up by Lady Chatham, from a sense of his imbecility, and desire of putting her children under the protection of her brothers. I do not know what to think. His resignation, followed directly by a fit of the gout, looks suspicious. And yet, has he been acting madness for two years together? Will his appearance have any effect, if he does produce himself? and how are he and Mr. Grenville to marry their incompatible politics together. Oh! say the last dozen years, what trouble is there in reconciling inconsistencies! or, suppose he is mad, —is he a worse politician for that? *Nullum magnum ingenium sine mixturâ dementiæ.* A mad minister and a mad people must conquer the world.

Your neighbour Paoli, I see, goes on grinding the French to powder. The Duc de Choiseul has a still worse enemy at home. There is a Mademoiselle L'Ange, now Countess de Barré, who has mounted from the dregs of her profession to the zenith of it, and gained an ascendant that all the duchesses and beauties of Versailles could not attain. Her husband has long been the pimp of Marshal Richelieu, and married this nymph in order to pave her way to favour. She gets ground every day, and probably will save Paoli before my Lord Chatham steps in to his assistance.

We have a new Russian Ambassador, who is to be magnificence itself. He is wondrously civil, and copious of words. He treated me the other night with a pompous relation of his sovereign lady's heroism. I never doubted her courage. She sent for Dr. Dimsdale; would have no trial made on any person of her own age and corpulence:-went into the country with her usual company, swore Dimsdale to secrecy, and you may swear that he kept his oath to such a lioness. She was inoculated, dined, supped, and walked out in public, and never disappeared but one day. She has now inoculated her son. I wonder she did not, out of magnanimity, try the experiment on him first.

Your brother has had a terrible fit of the gout in his head and all over him. I had a note from him to-day, and he is better. I am recovered so entirely as to be stronger on my feet than before: but I have more resolution, and never touch tea or wine. I preach in vain—the Jesuits are fallen, but the time is not come for rooting out our physicians. These rogues persuade people that the bootikins are fatal. They now assert that my friend Lady Hervey, who died of a diarrhœa, was killed by the bootikins which she wore for the gout. All they can do is to keep up perspiration, which every body knows is the only thing that can be done for the gout. Mr. Chute wears

them every night, and walks better than he did seven years ago—but there is a charm in nonsense that nothing can resist! It is the only talent that preaches and prescribes with success! A fool educated in the school of a knave, makes a renowned general, archbishop, chancellor, or physician. What repeal of laws and burning of books there would be, if the world for one age had nothing in it but men of sense!—for they would be forced to be honest if there were no fools. Adieu! my last paragraphs would be treason and heresy in every country upon earth.

LETTER CXXXIII.

Arlington Street, Dec. 20, 1768.

We are as much occupied as we were four years ago, with Wilkes. His spirit which the Scotch call impudence, and the gods confidence, rises every day. He was very near embroiling the two Houses on his demand of the three lords, which I think I mentioned in my last. Mr. Grenville obtained to have Lord Temple omitted; the Lords would not oblige the two others to appear, but they have offered it; and if ever his affair comes on, which I doubt, will submit to go to the House of Commons. He has desired twice to be heard himself by the Lords, which they have rejected. Since that, he has behaved with new insolence. A printer being taken up by the House of Lords for printing a letter of Lord Weymouth, written three weeks before the affair in St. George's Fields, in which he offered soldiers to the civil magistrate in case of need, and to which a commentary was prefixed that charged the Administration with a premeditated design of blood; the printer confessed, by the authority of Wilkes himself, that both letter and remarks had been transmitted to the press by Wilkes, who still not content, has by hand-bills assumed to himself the honour of many more such publications. The Lords, though enraged, had the prudence not to care to examine him himself, attended as he might be by a mob, and to recollect that he is yet a member of the other House, to which they sent their complaint; a piece of personal discretion, that was none of the wisest, as it was flinging combustible matter into much the more combustible assembly of the two. It happened accordingly, that more fault was found with the letter than with the comment; and after variety of opinions, it was yesterday resolved to hear Wilkes at their bar on the 27th of January; there still being blindness enough not to perceive that the oftener this incendiary is touched, the more he gains ground.

He has had a new triumph. The day of the election for Middlesex the poll had continued peaceable till two o'clock, when a mob broke in, drove every body out of the town, maimed and wounded several, and really occasioned the death of two persons. At first the slaughter was thought more considerable. This mob seems to have been hired

by Sir William Beauchamp Proctor for defence, but, by folly or ill-management, proved the sole aggressors. The just scandal given by that proceeding has lost him the election, and Wilkes's counsel and nominee, Sergeant Glynn, was chosen a week afterwards by a large majority. Thus, after a persecution of four years, Wilkes, in prison, names the representatives for Middlesex!

These things must sound strange in Tuscan ears; but the events in a free state are as unlike those in an absolute government as the kinds of government themselves are unlike. The times wear a very tempestuous aspect, and while there is a singular want both of abilities and prudence, there is no want of mischievous intentions. Luckily, America is quiet; France, poor, foiled, and disgraced. In truth, I do not know whether any thing could restore harmony at home so soon as a foreign war, for which we are at least better prepared than she is. A war would quite restore Lord Chatham's faculties, when he could have an opportunity of being mad on a larger scale.

We are in constant expectation of hearing of the Duc de Choiseul's fall. The Comtesse de Barri maintains her ground, and they say will be presented to the Mesdames as soon as the Queen's mourning is over. This decency is delightful! While his wife lived, the King kept his mistresses openly; now a new one is not to be declared, while the Court still wears black and white silks for the Queen! The Duc d'Aiguillon is talked of as Choiseul's successor. At fifty-eight or nine, his majesty picks up a prostitute, and gives her leave to change the administration. I think he should not be called the *well-beloved*, but the *well-beloving*.

I never saw your new residence, Pisa, but have a notion that it is a charming place; but, how German! to take an aversion to Florence! the loveliest town upon earth! Has your little prince no eyes for pictures, statues, buildings, prospects? Where could one like to reign, if not there? For your sake, I still wish the black dogs may prove handsome, else I should not care if they were turnspits.

Tuesday, 23d.

They talk of strange proceedings, and that prosecutions for murder are to be commenced against the Duke of Northumberland and Sir William Beauchamp, who are taxed with having hired the mob at Brentford. The Houses are adjourned for three weeks; in which time I doubt the Oppositions will be more awake than the Ministers. I rejoice daily and weekly that I have nothing to do with this scene of combustion. Adieu!

LETTER CXXXIV.

Strawberry Hill, Jan. 14, 1769.

Whiston, and such prophecy-mongers, were very unlucky to die before the present era. They vented their foolish knowledge and

foolish conjectures in foretelling the downfall of the Pope and Turk, when there was not the least ground for such surmises. There is not a verse in the Revelations that would not set up a prophet *now*. Your neighbour, the lady of Babylon, is almost reduced to her own b—— house, and I have as little doubt that the Russians will give a good account of the Grand Signor. Are not you diverted with his proposing to the Catholics of Poland to turn Mahometans? It is plain that he thinks the Protestants are the most errant Christians. What pious defenders of the faith the great Turk and the good Czarina are! Then the liberties of the Gallican Church are upheld by Louis Quinze and the Comtesse du Barri; and the liberties of England by that excellent patriot, Alderman Wilkes! Well! you want to know what is doing in the ward of Farringdon Without.* The Lords are to meet on Monday, when the Alderman's writs of error will be argued before them. I think he will find no favour there. He is not to appear at the bar of the other House till the 27th, where he will probably make a better fight. The people are certainly intoxicated with him, and, should he be expelled, as he expects, he will undoubtedly be able to name his successor for Middlesex. What idle pains Cato, and such folks, took to be virtuous, when they might have been patriots on so much cheaper terms! Wilkes has got his addresses to his constituents already written and dated from Newgate, whither he expects to be sent; and if he is, he will have ten times a greater levée than my Lord Russell had there. A few days will decide whether my Lord Chatham will appear and claim his old civic crown again; in short, whether Cæsar will join Alderman Catiline, or wait till matters are riper for his descent. For my own part, I do not believe this demi-god will ever revisit the earth, since he has been so shorn of his beams.

All this is amusing; and yet, methinks, I would rather we made a great figure than a comical one. When one has been used to glory under Mr. Pitt, I sigh to think how he and we are fallen! We are afraid to meddle even in little Corsica, though the French have so wofully miscarried there; and we enjoy half the empire of the Mogul only to traffic in India Stock! We are no longer great any way. We have no great men; no great orators, writers, or poets. One would think they had all been killed in the last war. Nay, our very actors are uncommonly bad. I saw a new tragedy the other night, that was worse played, though at Drury-lane, than by any strollers I ever beheld; and yet they are good enough for the new pieces. The best we have are little comic operas. *Apropos* to operas; your old acquaintance the Duke of Dorset† is dead, after having worn out his constitution, and almost his estate. He has not left a tree standing in the venerable old park at Knowle. However, the family think themselves very happy that he did not marry a girl whom he kept, as he had a mind to do, if the state of his understanding had not empowered his relations to prevent it.

* Wilkes had just been elected Alderman of that ward.
† Charles Sackville, second Duke of Dorset.

Did you see as he passed to Rome the great lord* that gave birth to all our present disputes? He is said to be much recovered.

I shall return to London the day after to-morrow; and as this cannot set out till Tuesday, probably I shall have something to add. Do you know any thing of Lady Orford, and the state of her health? Mr. Hamilton spoke of her to me in the summer as almost expiring with an asthma.

London, Jan. 16th.

Wilkes's writs of error were argued yesterday before the Lords; and the Lord Chief Justice Wilmot, in the name of the other judges, declared in behalf of the verdict already given against him, which was then confirmed, without one lord saying a syllable in his defence. As he has two parts of the legislature thus firm against him, it remains to see whether he and the people can make any impression on the House of Commons. If the world can attend to any thing else, this week comes on before the House of Lords that most extraordinary cause between the families of Douglas and Hamilton, equal to any of the *Causes Célèbres*. Adieu! I do not hear a word of my Lord Chatham. Madame du Barri, the French meteor, does not seem to be a fixed star.

LETTER CXXXV.

Arlington Street, Jan. 31, 1769.

The affair of Wilkes is rather undecided yet, than in suspense. It has been a fair trial between faction and corruption; of two such common creatures, the richest will carry it.

The court of Aldermen set aside the election of Wilkes on some informality, but he was immediately rechosen. This happened on Friday last, the very day of his appearance at the House of Commons. He went thither without the least disturbance or mob, having dispersed his orders accordingly, which are obeyed implicitly. He did not, however, appear at the bar till ten at night, the day being wasted in debating whether he should be suffered to enter on his case at large, or be restrained to his two chief complaints. The latter was carried by 270 to 131, a majority that he will not easily reduce. He was then called in, looked ill, but behaved decently, and demanded to take the oaths and his seat. This affair, after a short debate, was refused; and his counsel being told the restrictions imposed, the House adjourned at midnight. To-day he goes again to the House, but whatever steps he takes there, or however long debates he may occasion, you may look upon his fate as decided in that place.

We are in hourly expectation of hearing that a nymph, more

* Lord Bute.

common still than the two I have mentioned, has occasioned what Wilkes has failed in now, a change in an administration. I mean the Comtesse du Barri. The *grands habits* are made, and nothing wanting for her presentation but—what do you think? some woman of quality to present her. In that servile Court and country, the nobility have had spirit enough to decline paying their court, though the King has stooped *à des bassesses* to obtain it. The Duc de Choiseul will be the victim; and they pretend to say that he has declared he will resign *à l'Anglaise*, rather than be *chassé* by such a creature. His indiscretion is astonishing: he has said at his own table, and she has been told so, "Madame du Barri est très mal informée; on ne parle pas des catins chez moi." Catin diverts herself and King Solomon the wise with tossing oranges into the air after supper, and crying, "*Saute, Choiseul! saute, Praslin!*" and then Solomon laughs heartily. Sometimes she flings powder in his sage face, and calls him *Jean Farine!* Well! we are not the foolishest nation in Europe yet! It is supposed that the Duc d'Aiguillon will be the successor.

I am going to send away this letter, because you will be impatient, and the House will not rise probably till long after the post is gone out. I did not think last May that you would hear this February that there was an end of mobs, that Wilkes was expelled, and the colonies quieted. However, pray take notice that I do not stir a foot out of the province of gazetteer into that of prophet. I protest, I know no more than a prophet what is to come. Adieu!

LETTER CXXXVI.

Arlington Street, Feb. 6, 1769.

I was not mistaken in announcing to you the approaching expulsion of Wilkes. It passed on Friday night, or rather at three on Saturday morning, by a majority of 219 against 137, after four days of such fatigue and long sittings as never were known together. His behaviour, in every respect but confidence, was so poor, that it confirmed what I have long thought, that he would lose himself sooner in the House of Commons that he can be crushed any where else. He has so little quickness or talent for public speaking, that he would not be heard with patience. Now he has all the *éclat* that sufferings, boldness, or his writings can give him—not that I think the latter have other merit than being calculated for the mob and the moment. He stands again for Middlesex, to be again expelled; yet nobody dares oppose him; and he is as sure of recommending his successor. Still there are people so wild and blind, as not to see that every triumph against him is followed by mortification and disgrace. In this country every violence turns back upon its authors.

My father, who governed for the longest time, and Mr. Pelham, who enjoyed the quietest administration, always leaned to lenient measures. They who think themselves wiser, have not met with equal success. As worthless a fellow as Wilkes is, the rigours exercised towards him have raised a spirit that will require still wiser heads to allay. Men have again turned seriously to the study of those controversies that agitated this country a hundred years ago; and instead of dipping in Roman and Greek histories for flowers to decorate the speeches of false patriotism, principles are revived that have taken deeper root; and I hope we may not see quarrels of a graver complexion than the dirty squabbles for places and profit. Persecution for politics has just the same issue as for religion; it spreads the oppressed doctrine; and though I think Wilkes as bad a man as if he were a *saint*, he will every day get disciples who will profit of his martyrdom. Thank God, that he has not turned methodist.

Apropos to *saints*. Do you know that one of the chief supports of Madame du Barri is that old hypocrite the Duc de la Vauguion, the dauphin's governor, and patron of the Jesuits. I remember, when I was in France, it was a common saying, "que Monsieur de Choiseul n'avoit rien fait en chassant les Jesuits, s'il ne chassoit aussi M. de la Vauguion." This Ignatian preceptor went the other day to *Madame*, the King's eldest and favourite daughter, and told her that Madame du Barri would certainly be presented, and that her Royal Highness would do well to receive her kindly. The Princess asked if he came by the King's order? He said, no; but that the Duc de Richelieu, and other of her Royal Highness' friends, advised her to that conduct. She said, with spirit and dignity, "Monsieur, sortez de ma chambre." We believe the presentation was made last Sunday, though the account is not yet come; and I think there is as little doubt of Choiseul's fall. I agree with you in praying that it may save Paoli. What an excellent contrast in the beginning and end of the King's life!

Do you know, I expect that the vast northern war will teach the Turks to read Grotius and Puffendorff. Adieu!

LETTER CXXXVII.

Arlington Street, Feb. 28, 1769.

So you and the Jesuits have lost the Pope! I don't believe they will comfort themselves so easily as you will. You are too discreet to betray the secrets of your province, therefore I will not ask if you have received any instructions to promote the interest of my Lord Bute to succeed him; yet, without your authority, I could easily make Mr. Wilkes believe so—or at least say so. I know where it would pass for as much gospel as any she is inclined to receive. I am to

dine to-morrow with the famous Mrs. Macaulay,* along with the Duc de la Rochefoucault. She is one of the sights that all foreigners are carried to see. Did you know this young duke? He is very amiable and worthy—much more worthy than his ancestor; not quite so agreeable. Our ladies run the men hard: we have actually two or three *upon the carpet* that for these last ten days have deadened the lustre of Wilkes himself, though his cause is far from being drawn to the dregs. A huge subscription has been made for him; but, with all the idolatry of his party, they will not trust his divinity with his own offerings, but are paying his debts and thefts. Is not there a sobriety in our madness that stamps it for our own?

Well, but to come to goddesses: after a marriage of twenty years, Augustus Hervey,† having fallen in love with a physician's daughter at Bath, has attacked his spouse, the Maid of Honour, the fair Chudleigh, and sought a divorce for adultery. Unfortunately, he had waited till all the witnesses of their marriage, and of their two deliveries, are dead, as well as the two children. The provident virgin had not been so negligent. Last year she forced herself into the house of the parson who had married them, and who was at the point of death. By bullying, and to get rid of her, she forced the poor man to give up the certificate. Since that she has appeared in Doctors' Commons, and sworn by the Virgins Mary and Diana, that she never was married to Mr. Hervey. The Ecclesiastical Court has admitted her corporal oath, and enjoined silence to Mr. Hervey. Next week this fair injured innocence, who is but fifty, is to be married to the Duke of Kingston, who has kept her openly for almost half that time, and who by this means will recover half his fortune which he had lavished on her. As a proof of her purity and poverty, her wedding-gown is white sattin, trimmed with Brussels lace and pearls. Every word of this history is exactly true. The physician, who is a little more in his senses than the other actors, and a little honester, will not give his daughter; nay, has offered her five thousand pounds not to marry Mr. Hervey, but Miss Rhubarb is as much above worldly decorum as the rest, and persists, though there is no more doubt of the marriage of Mr. Hervey and Miss Chudleigh than that of your father and mother. It is a cruel case upon his family, who can never acquiesce in the legitimacy of his children, if any come from this bigamy.‡

The French cannot keep pace with us. Madame du Barri's presentation is still at a stand; but the Jesuits still trust in her and the Duc de la Vauguion, and flatter themselves that this new idolatry will bring back King Solomon to his old gods. I was talking of this adventure the other day to old Mrs. Selwyn:§ she said, with all the

* During the height of his popularity, Dr. Wilson, Rector of St. Stephen's Walbrook, conferred upon her the unprecedented honour of erecting a statue to her while living, in the chancel of his church, which was removed by his successor.—Ed.

† Second son of John Lord Hervey, afterwards Earl of Bristol.

‡ This marriage did not take place.

§ Mary Farringdon, widow of John Selwyn, Esq., (Treasurer to Caroline, Queen of George II.) and Woman of the Bed-chamber to that Queen.

wit of her son George, "The French have often outwitted us; I hope now they will outfool us." You see that will not be an easy matter. My dear sir, you ought to be recalled; indeed you are too much in your senses to represent us. Two nights ago, I was looking over some part of our correspondence, and find that for seven-and-twenty years I have been sending you the annals of Bedlam. Adieu!

LETTER CXXXVIII.

Arlington Street, March 23, 1769.

More tempests! Pray, Mr. Minister, keep up your dignity as well as you can; for I doubt that you will be a little laughed at. You are not now representing the conquerors of East and West. Your crest is fallen! Our campaigns do not extend beyond the confines of Middlesex. We will begin with the *third* election at Brentford. One Dingley was sent to oppose Wilkes, but took panic and ran away, and nobody would propose him. The next day he advertised that he had gone thither with all the resolution in the world, provided there had been no danger, and so Wilkes was chosen once more. The House again rejected him; but, lest the country should complain of not being represented, another writ is issued; the Court is to set up somebody, and a new egg is laid for riots and clamours.

Oh! but this is not all. As one or two towns had sent instructions to their members, it was thought wise to procure loyal addresses, and one was obtained from Essex; which, being the great county for calves, produced nothing but ridicule. I foresaw, and said from the first moment, that there could not be a sillier step taken, as it would sow division in every county and great town in England, by splitting the inhabitants into instructors and addressors. Well! the aforesaid Mr. Dingley got an assembly of merchants, and carried an address ready drawn. It produced opposition and hubbub, and Mr. Dingley struck a lawyer in the face and beat out one of his teeth. The man knocked him down, drubbed him, and put him in the Crown Office.

This scheme defeated, an address was left at a public office to be signed by all who pleased, and yesterday was fixed for it to be presented at St. James's by six hundred merchants and others. This imposing cavalcade no sooner set forth than they were hissed and pelted; and when they came to Temple-bar they found an immense mob, who had shut the gates against them, and they were forced to make their escape by any streets and by-lanes that were not occupied. Not a third part reached St. James's, and they were overtaken by a prodigious concourse, attending a hearse drawn by four horses. On one side of the hearse hung a large escutcheon, representing the chairman at Brentford killing Clarke; on the other, the guards firing on the mob in St. George's Fields and shooting Allen, with streams of blood running down. This procession drove to St. James's Gate,

where grenadiers were fixed to prevent their entrance, and the gates towards the park shut. Here the King, Ministers, and Foreign Ministers were besieged till past four, though the Riot-Act was read, and Lord Talbot* came down, and seised one man, while the mob broke the steward's wand in his hand. It was near five before they could recover and present the address, which the mob had tried to seize; they had so pelted the chairman of the committee of merchants, that he was not fit to appear. The Dukes of Northumberland and Kingston were as ill treated. The latter, coming from Bedford House, had been taken for the Duke of Bedford, and had his new wedding-coach, favours, and liveries covered with mud. Fifteen men are taken up, but I don't find that any thing can be proved against them. In short, never was a more disgraceful scene! Don't wonder if *I* smile, who have seen more formidable mobs, and something of a better head opposed to them. Many cry out "Shame!"—but half, that cry out, I remember encouraging mobs, and for much worse ends than these poor infatuated people have in view. The Minister† of those days would not have seen such a procession arrive in St. James's without having had intelligence of it, nor without being prepared for it. Those great and able persons, the Bedford faction, have conjured up this storm, and now are frightened out of their wits at it. All is perfectly quiet to-day, and the King has been at the House to pass the Bill for the Duke of Grafton's divorce. Luckily, Newmarket begins on Monday, during which holy season there is always a suspension of arms.

Good Friday, 24th.

Peace and cross-buns reign to-day. If no new ingenuity is stirred, the people, I don't doubt, will give no more disturbance. But if the Scotch, who cannot rest in patience without persecuting Wilkes, and who have neither known how to quiet or to quell him, prompt new violence, the nation will call out for Lord Chatham and Lord Temple, and the Ministers will have leisure to repent the succession of blunders that they have committed. It is strange that men will not learn in every country that defensive measures are the only wise measures for an Administration! For a little more power they risk what they possess, and never discover that the most absolute are those which reign in the hearts of the people. Were Cardinal Richelieu, Cromwell, or Louis XI., more despotic than Mr. Pitt at the end of the last reign? And then he had the comfort of going to bed every night without the fear of being assassinated. What a blessed life does Count d'Œyras‡ pass, who is forced to lock up himself and all his power at the end of his palace, with guards in every room, and with every door barred and bolted! As superior power cannot bestow superior wisdom or strength, nor destroy the real equality between man and man, is it not wonderful that any man should stake charac-

* William, first Earl of Talbot, Lord Steward.
† Sir Robert Walpole.
‡ Prime Minister of Portugal.

ter, life, and peace of mind, against the odious prerogative of being feared? Hated alive, and reviled dead, they risk every thing for the silly satisfaction of turning voluntary into trembling sycophants. Every minister is sure of flatterers enough: no, those flatterers must be slaves. Charles I. was not satisfied with the servile adulation of his bishops; the Presbyterian ministers must burn incense too. Oh! that men should still imagine that to be hated is the way to happiness!

LETTER CXXXIX.

Arlington Street, April 14, 1769.

Yesterday, the day of expectation, is over: I mean the election at Brentford, for I must recollect that you have not been thinking of nothing else for a fortnight, as we have. It ended bloodless, both sides having agreed to keep the peace; chance ratified that compromise. Take notice, I engage no farther than for what is past. Wilkes triumphed, as usual, having a majority of between eight and nine hundred. The court-candidate,* who had offered himself for the service, and who was as imprudently accepted, gave no proofs of the determined valour that he had promised. His friends exerted themselves as little; and though he was to have been conveyed by a squadron of many gentlemen, his troop did not muster above twenty, assembled in his father's garden, broke down the wall that they might steal a march, and yet were repulsed at Hyde Park Corner, where the Commander lost his hat, and in self-defence rode over a foot-passenger. He polled under three hundred, and owed his safety to Wilkes's friends. This defeat the House of Commons are at this moment repairing—I believe I may add, by widening the breach; for, as they intend to reject Wilkes and accept Lutterel, they will probably make the county quite mad. In short, they have done nothing but flounder from one blunder into another, and, by an impartial mixture of rashness and timidity, have brought matters to a pass, which I fear will require at last very sharp methods to decide one way or other. We have no heads but wrong ones; and wrong heads on both sides have not the happy attribute of two negatives in making an affirmative. Instead of annihilating Wilkes by buying or neglecting him, his enemies have pushed the Court on a series of measures which have made him excessively important; and now every step they take must serve to increase his faction, and make themselves more unpopular. The clouds all around them are many and big, and will burst as fast as they try violent methods. I tremble at the prospect, and suffer to see the abyss into which we are falling, and the height from whence we have fallen! We were tired of being in a situation to give

* Colonel Lutterel, eldest son of Lord Irnham.

the law to Europe, and now cannot give it with safety to the mob—for giving it, when they are not disposed to receive it, is of all experiments the most dangerous; and whatever may be the consequence in the end, seldom fails to fall on the heads of those who undertake it. I have said it to you more than once; it is amazing to me that men do not prefer the safe, amiable and honourable method of governing the people as they like to be governed, to the invidious and restless task of governing them contrary to their inclinations. If princes or ministers considered, that despair makes men fearless, instead of making them cowards, surely they would abandon such fruitless policy. It requires ages of oppression, barbarism and ignorance, to sink mankind into pusillanimous submission; and it requires a climate too that softens and enervates. I do not think we are going to try the experiment; but as I am sorry the people give provocation, so I am grieved to see that provocation too warmly resented, because men forget from whence they set out, and mutual injuries beget new principles, and open to wider views than either party had at first any notion of. Charles the First would have been more despotic, if he had defeated the republicans, than he would have dreamed of being before the civil war; and Colonel Cromwell certainly never thought of becoming Protector, when he raised his regiment. The King lost his head, and the Colonel his rest; and we were so fortunate, after a deluge of blood, as to relapse into a little better condition than we had been before the contest; but if the son of either had been an active rogue, we might have lost our liberties for some time, and not recovered them without a much longer struggle.

I must now desire a favour of you. The Contessa Rena* is returned to Florence, and we hear has even been received at Court, yet she is not satisfied without the *countenance del Signor Ministro d'Inghilterra*. As an Austrian Court has not been squeamish, I think you need not be so: nay, I don't suspect you. Besides, as our representative, you may plead the precedent of her Grace of Kingston. But, without a joke, it will oblige me and two of my friends, if you will take notice of her and show her civilities. She is a good-humoured inoffensive creature; I knew her myself; she has been at Strawberry, and lain there; *en tout bien et honneur, s'entend;* and it will oblige the above-persons extremely, if she writes word, that *Monsù Menn* has distinguished her at my request. I would not ask this, if I thought it would put you under any difficulties: nor do I mean that you should neglect the emperor for her. Methinks, without stirring out of the street *de' Santi Apostoli*,† you have got acquainted with as many sovereigns as old Petersborough,‡ that bragged of having seen more Kings and postilions than any man in

* A Florentine, who had been long in England; had originally been mistress (at Florence, where she was wife of a wine-merchant) of Lord Pembroke, and afterwards here, of the Earl of March, and occasionally of others. See Correspondence of George Selwyn, vol. i. *passim*.

† In which Sir Horace Mann lived at Florence.

‡ Charles Mordaunt, the famous earl.

Europe. I delight in the mock election of a Pope made to amuse Cæsar. How the Capital must blush at such a Cæsar, and such an entertainment!

Luckly, I think the Capital will see little more than mock elections.

Otranto,* I must tell you, is in the kingdom of Naples, not in Sicily. You will see by this paragraph that I have received a certain letter† from you, to which I do not care to say more by the post. Wherever Otranto is, I am glad I had no letter from thence.

Madame du Barri will certainly be presented yet. Whether she will be able to save Corsica, I don't know. Such nymphs are seldom born for the good of any country. My dear sir, it would be worthy of you to shuffle your two or three great and little princes together, and form a league that for once might have the good of mankind for its object. Adieu!

LETTER CXL.

Arlington Street, May 11, 1769.

You know my exactitude, and therefore will have justly concluded from my silence, that nothing material has happened since I wrote last.

The election of Colonel Lutterel, though it has given much offence, produced none of the disturbances that were expected. The supporters of the Bill of Rights have, on the contrary, adopted a much more decent system; not with the approbation of Wilkes, whose existence depending on heats and riots, has made him afraid of being dropped, and of seeing any grievances in question, except his own. The supporters, or London Tavern, as they are called from the place of their meeting, determined on a petition to the King, in which they have enumerated all the matters of complaint from the beginning of this reign. This has lain to be signed, and has been prodigiously signed by the freeholders of Middlesex for these three weeks; and it was expected would be presented a week ago. What has prevented it, I don't know; probably the sitting of the Parliament, which was to have risen last Tuesday was se'nnight; but on the preceding Saturday fifteen of Wilkes's friends petitioned against Lutterel. The House could not refuse to hear them; last Monday was appointed, when after a debate that lasted till near three in the morning, Lutterel was confirmed by two hundred and twenty-one to one hundred and fifty-two. Sixty-nine was no shining majority. The next day George Grenville dined at a tavern with Lord Rockingham's friends, and this union will no doubt last—till next session. On Tuesday the Houses

* Mr. Walpole had written the gothic story called "The Castle of Otranto."

† Lord Bute, when at Florence, had talked to Sir Horace Mann (probably to please him) of writing to Mr. Walpole from Otranto.

were prorogued; but as the King went to put an end to the session, the behaviour of the people was as offensive as it could be, without an actual tumult.

Lord Chatham, as I foretold, has, you find, not appeared. His friends still talk of his coming to town; I see not to what end now.

Well! Madame du Barri has been suddenly presented, when nobody thought of it. The King returning from Choisi, found the Duc de Richelieu reading a letter, who said, "Sire, the Comtesse du Barri desires to have the honour of being presented to your Majesty,"—"With all my heart," replied Solomon; when she will; to-morrow, if she likes it." Presented she was accordingly, and at night gave a great supper; to which were invited Richelieu and all the Duc de Choiseul's enemies. Richelieu, engaged in this plot with the King, looks very unfavourable for the Minister. Every body is now presented to her, and she has been publicly at Marly. The mesdames scratched M. de Beauvilliers out of the list for that party on *his* being presented. But I should think such affronts would only render the mistress more eager to establish herself. I grieve that if the change should arrive, it will not be in time to save Paoli.

The Russians have begun with vivacity and seized Asoph; still the Empress makes me a Turk in my heart. Don't you love the Chinese? Czernichew, her sumptuous Minister here, was named for the embassy to China, but the Emperor said he would not receive an ambassador from a murderess. How often what we call barbarians make Europe blush!

Oh! I forgot to tell you that the Comte du Barri, who has been acknowledged by Lord Barrymore,* insists on calling himself by that title. He was reported to be dead. The Duc de Chartres said, "C'est pour nous prouver qu'il est véritablement Comte du *Barrymort*." I think the summer will be tolerably quiet here. Every body is going to make hay and keep sheep, except the light troops that will skirmish in the newspapers. You, I hope, have got rid of your Emperors, and will have a little quiet too. When do your old folks at Rome intend to choose the last Pope? Does the Emperor design to dethrone St. Peter and restore Julius Cæsar?

LETTER CXLI.

Strawberry Hill, May 25, 1769.

EVERY THING here is perfectly calm; Wilkes so much forgotten, that he seems to have forgot himself. The Middlesex petition was at last presented yesterday, but as decently and respectfully as if it had come from Scotland. Opposition, I think, must set out upon some new fund, for even they themselves seem tired of the old.

* As a relation.

The Duke of Grafton has already chosen a new wife, and is going to marry Miss Wrottesley, a niece of the Duchess of Bedford. She is not handsome, but is quiet and reasonable, and has a very amiable character.

As I told you in my last, we shall be happy enough to be able to divert ourselves with foreign news, Turks, Pope, or Paoli. It is generally thought here that the last will be able to hold out, from the inaccessible fastnesses of his island, and from the almost impossibility that the French will have of supplying themselves with provisions; and that even if they should succeed, the expense will pass all bounds. I think the Duc de Choiseul not at all likely to live long enough in his ministerial capacity to see that conquest achieved. His successor, whoever it shall be, will scarce compliment him by finishing his work at so dear and burdensome a rate.

So the Countess* is coming over, and the Countess is going back again! Why that is all that one has to say on her coming and going. I do not know whether she and her son will meet, but neither can meet with any body less worth meeting.

Every body is going into the country to recruit themselves with health or money, or wit, or faction. This has been an expensive winter in all those articles. London is such a drain, that we seem annihilated in summer: at least the activity and events from the beginning of November to the beginning of June are so out of proportion to the other five months, that we are not the same nation in the one half year and the other. Paris itself, compared to London, appeared to me a mere country town, where they live upon one piece of news for a month. When I lived in the country (which was but the last three summers of my father's life, for I don't call this place so,) I used to be tired to death of the conversation on the price of oats and barley, and those topics that people talk about and about by their almanack, and which never do, and which never have occasion to come to a conclusion. I have been so used to think to a point, that the common conversation of the world about common things is insupportable to me; and to say the truth, I know less of the common affairs of the world than if I had lived all my days in a college. Elections, justice business, prices of commodities, and all matters of detail are Hebrew to me. Men that know every circumstance, and women that never know any, are equally good company to me. I had as willingly hear a story where every thing is confounded, as where every thing is detailed; the event of every thing seeming to me all that is worth knowing; and then I want something new. As I have nothing new, I may as well finish my letter. Adieu!

* Lady Orford.

LETTER CXLII.

Strawberry Hill, June 14, 1769.

I THANK you for the history of the Pope and his genealogy, or, rather, for what is to be his genealogy; for I suppose all those tailors and coachmen his relations will now found noble families. They may enrich their blood with the remaining spoils of the Jesuits, unless, which would not surprise me, his new Holiness should now veer about, and endeavour to save the order; for I think the Church full as likely to fall by sacrificing its janissaries, as by any attacks that can be made upon it. *Deme unum, deme etiam unum.*

If I care little about your Roman politics, I am not so indifferent about your Corsican. Poor brave Paoli!—but he is not disgraced! We, that have sat still and seen him overwhelmed, must answer it to history. Nay, the Mediterranean will taunt us in the very next war. Choiseul triumphs over us and Madame du Barri: her star seems to have lost its influence. I do not know what another lady* will say to Choiseul on the late behaviour of his friend, the ambassador, here. As the adventure will make a chapter in the new edition of Wiquefort, and, consequently, will strike *you*, I will give you the detail. At the ball on the King's birthday, Count Czernichew was sitting in the box of the Foreign Ministers next to Count Seilern, the Imperial Ambassador. The latter, who is as fierce as the Spread Eagle itself, and as stiff as the chin of all the Ferdinands, was, according to his custom, as near to Jupiter as was possible. Monsieur du Chatelet and the Prince de Masserano came in. Chatelet sidled up to the two former, spoke to them and passed behind them, but on a sudden lifted up his leg and thrust himself in between the two Imperials. The Russian, astonished and provoked, endeavoured to push him away, and a jostle began that discomposed the faces and curls of both; and the Russian even dropped the word *impertinent*. Czernichew, however, quitted the spot of battle, and the Prince de Masserano, in support of the family-compact, hobbled into the place below Chatelet. As the two champions retired, more words at the door. However, the Russian's coach being first, he astonished every body by proposing to set Monsieur du Chatelet down at his own house. In the coach, *it is said*, the Frenchman protested he had meant nothing personal either to Count Czernichew, or to the Russian Minister, but having received orders from his Court to take place on all occasion *next* to the Imperial Ambassador, he had but done his duty. Next morning he visited Czernichew, and they are *personally* reconciled. It was, however, feared that the dispute would be renewed, for, at the King's next levée, both were at the door, ready to push in when it should be opened; but the Russian kept behind, and at the bottom of the room without mixing with the rest of the Foreign Minis-

* The Czarina.

ters. The King, who was much offended at what had passed, called Count Czernichew into the middle of the room, and talked to him for a very considerable time. Since then, the Lord Chamberlain has been ordered to notify to all the Foreign Ministers that the King looks on the ball at Court as a private ball, and declares, *to prevent such disagreeable altercations for the future*, that there is no precedence there. This declaration is ridiculed, because the ball at Court is almost the only ceremony observed there, and certainly the most formal, the princes of the blood dancing first, and every body else being taken out according to their rank. Yet the King, being the fountain of all rank, may certainly declare what he pleases, especially in his own palace. The public papers, which seldom spare the French, are warm for the Russian. Chatelet, too, is not popular, nor well at Court. He is wrong-headed, and at Vienna was very near drawing his Court into a scrape by his haughtiness. His own friends even doubt whether this last exploit will not offend at Versailles, as the Duc de Choiseul has lately been endeavouring to soften the Czarina, wishes to send a minister thither, and has actually sent an agent. Chatelet was to have gone this week, but I believe waits to hear how his behaviour is taken. Personally, I am quite on his side, though I think him in the wrong; but he is extremely civil to me; I live much at his house, admire his wife exceedingly, and, besides, you know, have declared war with the Czarina; so what I say is quite in confidence to you, and for your information. As an Englishman, I am whatever Madam Great Britain can expect of me. As intimate with the Chatelets, and extremely attached to the Duchess of Choiseul, I detest Madame du Barri and her faction. You, who are a Foreign Minister, and can distinguish like a theologian between the *two natures*, perfectly comprehend all this; and, therefore, to the charity of your casuistry I recommend myself in this jumble of contradictions, which you may be sure do not give me any sort of trouble either way. At least I have not *three* distinctions, like Chatelet when he affronted Czernichew, but neither in his private nor public capacity.

This fracas happens very luckily, as we had nothing left to talk of; for of the Pope we think no more, according to the old saying, than of the Pope of Rome. Of Wilkes there is no longer any question, and of the war under the Pole we hear nothing. Corsica, probably, will occasion murmurs, but they will be preserved in pickle till next winter. I am come hither for two months, very busy with finishing my round tower, which has stood still these five years, and with an enchanting new cottage that I have built, and other little works. In August I shall go to Paris for six weeks. In short I am delighted with having bid adieu to Parliament and politics, and with doing nothing but what I like all the year round. Adieu!

LETTER CXLIII.

Arlington Street, July 19, 1769.

You will possibly wonder that you have not heard from me, when the public papers must have raised your curiosity and impatience. The appearance of Lord Chatham, after so long an exclusion of himself, is no indifferent event. It has opened all eyes and mouths from hence to Madrid. I am not apt to neglect such æras. In truth, I wished to be able to tell you more than mere conjectures. *Venit, vidit,*—the *vicit* is to come. He was twenty minutes alone with the King; but what passed, neither of their Majesties has been pleased to tell. *General conversation only,* is the word given out. That the Earl is perfectly well, that is, *compos mentis,* and grown fat, is certain. That the moment of his appearance, *i. e.* so immediately after the petition of the Livery of London, set on foot and presented by his friend Alderman Beckford, has a hostile look, cannot be doubted. That he was *not* sent for—is, I believe, still more true. Farther this deponent saith not. If petitioning had caught and run briskly, to be sure it might have been necessary to call in so great a fireman to stop the flame, as apothecaries give rhubarb to check a looseness. But London, for the first time in its life, has not dictated to England. Essex and Hertfordshire have refused to petition; Wiltshire and Worcester say they will petition, and Yorkshire probably will. But London has so *outdone its usual outdoings,** that the example is not tempting, especially as they did not venture to sign their own petition. They have attacked ministers, judges, and parliament itself. The latter, in all likelihood, will ask them some questions next winter. Lord Holland has already asked one of the Lord Mayor; who chose to shift the blame from himself. It has stirred up a controversy which is not likely to end so. The world is persuaded that there are two factions in the Ministry,—if there were not, it would be the only place void of them. The East-India Company is all faction and gaming. Such fortunes are made and lost every day as are past belief. Our history will appear a gigantic lie hereafter, when we are shrunk again to our own little island. People trudge to the other end of the town to vote who shall govern empires at the other end of the world. Panchaud, a banker from Paris, broke yesterday for seventy thousand pounds, by buying and selling stock; and Sir Laurence Dundas *paid in* a hundred and forty thousand pounds for what he had bought. The Company have more and greater places to give away than the First Lord of the Treasury. Riches, abuse, cabals, are so enormously overgrown, that one wants conception and words to comprehend or describe them. Even Jewish prophets would have found Eastern hyperboles deficient, if Nineveh

* An expression of Cibber on Mrs. Oldfield in his preface to the "Provoked Husband," that was much ridiculed at the time.

had been half so extravagant, luxurious, and rapacious as this wicked good town of London. I expect it will set itself on fire at last, and light the match with India bonds and bank-bills. As I pass by it and look at it, I cannot help talking to it, as Ezekiel would do, and saying "with all those combustibles in thy bowels, with neither government, police, or prudence, how is it that thou still existeth?" Well! I am going to a little quiet town, where they have had nothing but one woman to talk of for this twelvemonth,—I mean Paris. Madame du Barri gains ground, and yet Monsieur da Choiseul carries all his points. He has taken Corsica, bought Sweden, made a Pope, got the Czarina drubbed by the Turks, and has restored the Parliament of Bretagne, in spite of the Duc'Aiguillon,—for revenge can make so despotic and ambitious a man as Choiseul even turn patriot,—and yet at this moment I believe he dreads my Lord Chatham more than Madame du Barri.

I shall set out on the fifteenth of next month, and return the first week in October. During that interval I think you had better not write to me, as you know with what difficulty I got your letters there.

I am much concerned that the journeyings and sojournings of your little Court are so expensive to you. Nor do I know what to advise. I rather am against your buying annuities. Pray do not go and game in India Stock. My hopes are, that your Court will soon grow older. The frisks of a young reign never last. Princes take root in their capital after their first vagaries are over. Ministers do not love to gallop about; and if these peregrinations are burdensome to you, what must they be to the Court itself? The finances will fail, and they have no Bengal to draw upon. There will come lectures from Vienna, and you will sit down quietly again in Via de' Santi Apostoli.

My Lady Orford, I hear, is stopped short at Milan, and does not talk of coming these six-months. If she has tapped a new city, I shall not wonder if she never comes. Adieu! I have been writing in the dark, and do not know whether you can read my letter; I find I cannot read it myself.

LETTER CXLIV.

Calais, Oct. 8, 1769.

You see, my dear sir, I am impatient to gather up the thread of our correspondence, which my journey to Paris interrupted. I have not, in truth, all the merit I could wish in beginning my letter two or three days before it can set out (for I intend it shall not be fit to send from hence,) but here I am, locked up by a favourable wind, a very tantalizing circumstance. This favourable gale keeps all the vessels on the other coast, and will not suffer a single one to step

and fetch me. However, I shall wait here, and not return to Paris, like my Lady Orford. Do you know, that she has literally been here twice, and whether from fear, or from illness, as she pretended, went back to Paris, and, I believe, before I left it, was on her return to Italy. I heard of nobody that saw her, but my cousin the Minister,* and Madame Geoffrin, who was not at all flattered with this wise woman from the East coming to worship her, but gave me a ridiculous account of the *empressement* and homage of the countess, who kissed her all over with a pilgrim's fervour. She described, too, a poor emaciated, low-spirited knight of St. Stephen,† who is said to be a *savant*, but who, Madame Geoffrin thinks, wasted in the occult sciences. Who is this poor Paladin? and did you ever hear of a more absurd expedition?

The absurdity of the French is not inferior. Instead of vaunting, his military prowess, they cry out down Paoli as a rank coward. I own I think he has not dignified the catastrophe of his story, and I shall admire him still less, if it is true, as the French say, that he has secured a great fortune on the Continent; but sure it is not their business to lower their own conquest. The Prince de Beauveau,‡ who is by no means the amiable man we thought he would prove, but at once full of all the pride and meanness of Versailles, told me that the Emperor, in a letter, had said of Paoli, *minuit præsentia famam.* I do not believe it; in the first place, because even a common-place quotation is a pitch above an emperor, and, in the second place, because you told me with what esteem the Emperor had spoken of him. By our papers, I find that his *præsentia* has not at all *minuited famam chez nous.* You shall know more about him when I arrive. As yet I have not heard whether he joins Wilkes, or is enlisted by the Ministry against my Lord Chatham.

To be serious, I doubt affairs wear a very unpromising aspect; at least, I, who have heard nothing in my absence, collect so much from the newspapers; and if they strike me in that light, what effect will they have upon you at a greater distance! I lament this the more deeply, as I come from a place where I have seen how much we are hated, and where I am certain there are such bad designs against us. The Duc de Choiseul will never forgive his inferiority in the late war: his ambition is unbounded; and if the times resemble those of Charles I., we shall find in him another Richelieu. I have no doubt of his having already tampered with Wilkes; but, as he dreads the predominant star of Lord Chatham, I dropped, as by accident, to a confidant of the Duc's, that if the latter did not wish a war, nothing could be so imprudent as to encourage Wilkes, whose faction would bring back Lord Chatham; and Lord Chatham, war.

You do not doubt, I suppose, of the restless ambition of Choiseul. Every step he takes marks that it is pointed at us. He has settled

* Robert Walpole, fourth son of Horatio, first Lord Walpole, Chargé des affaires at Paris.

† Cavalier Mozzi.

‡ Son to the Prince de Craon, President of the Council at Florence, where the Prince de Beauveau was brought up.

the limits of their several dominions both with Sardinia and the Empress-Queen; consequently avoided those rocks of offence. He has poured the Turks on Russia; and he is so fond of that exploit, that before me at his own house, he sent for a French gazette which he had dictated himself, and read it—it was to assert the advantages gained by the Ottomans. To his levity, in truth, I trust much. It is equal to his daring, and composes it. He is every instant on the point of falling by provoking Madame du Barri; and forgetting that his predecessor, the Cardinal de Bernis, was the sacrifice of his own insolence by insulting Madame de Pompadour. The Duc de Choiseul treads in the same steps. The present journey to Fontainebleau will, I think, decide the victory, unless the Duc bends; that is not without probability: a fortnight ago the mistress sent for him to ask a favour for a dependant. He replied, she might come to him. She insisted, and he went; and stayed above an hour; and yet did not grant what she asked. However, the length of the visit did not look hostile. It is true, his sister, Madame de Grammont, and the Princess de Beauveau were absent. As their violence has blown up this flame, they will not easily suffer him to make his peace, by which their pride must be sacrificed; and as they will all be together at Fontainebleau, (and yet the Choiseul-women will not see or King or mistress,) it is a thousand to one some *éclat* happens.

Madame de Mirepoix* is the soul of the opposite cabal; no hatred ever transcended that between her and her sister Beauveau. The Prince does not see his sister; but though so submissive a husband, trims, and is not ill with the mistress. May these gentle dames continue their animosities! I have a little hope in the Emperor, and that he will not be a quiet spectator of the ascendant France is reassuming. We heard at Paris that some Austrian squadrons are marching into Poland, in consequence, it was thought, of the interview with the King of Prussia. How emperors fall in love with this man! I hope the Empress-Queen will not deprive him of another friend, as the Russian Empress did of the first. It hurts me to be forced to wish success to this latter Semiramis; but it is one of the curses of politics to couple one with those one hates; and what have I to do with politics? I have done with them, and am going back to trifle at Strawberry. Paris revived in me that natural passion, the love of my country's glory; I must put it out; it is a wicked passion and breathes war. It is self-love and vanity at bottom, and insolence easily rekindles it. Well! I will go home, love my neighbour, and pray for peace.

Arlington Street, Oct. 13th.

I arrived the night before last; and do not find any reason to change my opinion on the state of this country. It approaches by fast strides to some great crisis, and to me never wore so serious an air, except in the Rebellion. Not professing prophecy from interested views, I shall be happy to be mistaken.

* Sister of the Prince de Beauveau.

Paoli is much approved here. The Court have artfully adopted him, and at least crushed one egg on which faction, and her brood-hen, Mrs. Macaulay, would have been very glad to have sat. He prefers being well with the government that protects him.

There is no confirmation of Austrian squadrons entering Poland, but the Russians have certainly beaten the Turks considerably, before Prince Gallitzin's recall arrived. Part of their fleet is on the coast of Yorkshire. Sir Edward Hawke has no doubt of its mastering Constantinople at once, if it arrives there. The plan is said to be the Empress's own against the opinion of her council. Adieu! pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

LETTER CXLV.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 6, 1769.

Before I receive your answer about him, I must tell you that I have seen your friend Paoli. I found him last week at Court, and could not believe it when I was told who he was. I had stood close by him for some minutes, taking him for an English, or at least, for a Scotch officer. Nobody sure ever had an air so little foreign! He was dressed in scarlet and gold, and the simplicity of his whole, appearance had not given me the slightest suspicion of any thing remarkable in him. Afterwards, in the circle, as he again stood by me, he asked me some indifferent question, without knowing me. I told him, without naming myself, that you were my particular friend. He said he had written many letters to you, but believed they had all been intercepted. I replied, I would do him justice and tell you so. The King and Queen both took great notice of him. He has just made a tour to Bath, Oxford, &c., and was every where received with much distinction; so Mrs. Macaulay, it seems, has not laid him under an interdict.

I know not what to say to you upon politics. The imprudence of postponing the Parliament till after Christmas has given time for a large number of petitions, and more perhaps will follow, yet I do not think the general spirit so violent as it should seem from these appearances. It is impossible but some mob may be assembled every where to sign a petition, and then such petition is called the sense of the country, though in many it is nothing less; and besides the Scotch counties, the majority have not petitioned. The Court will, nay must, resist the dissolution of the Parliament, and, if the members are not frightened for their re-elections, they must be strongly against such a measure: their seats have too recently cost them more than they can afford. A dissolution would be big with every evil imaginable. Yet I fear the tempest is mounted too high to evaporate without some serious mischief. The city of London is full of faction. In short, the evils of vast wealth, luxury, license

and ambition, are ripened to a head. These natural causes have operated more to our present disorders than any specific reason. The times have produced the crisis, not particular men. They are times out of which considerable men will grow—some great—I hope some good: but few, I think, of the present actors will be the better for the confusions we have in prospect. I sit on the beach and contemplate the storm, but have not that apathy of finding that

"Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis," &c.

I love the constitution I am used to, and wish to leave it behind me; and Roman as my inclinations are, I do not desire to see a Cæsar on the stage, for the pleasure of having another Brutus; especially as Cæsars are more prolific than Brutuses.

I seemed to have judged right, when I thought Fontainebleau would produce some crisis in the French Ministry too. The letters from Paris look as if the mistress gained ground. The turn in favour of the Russians is another heavy blow to the Duc de Choiseul. We persuade ourselves that nothing can stop the Czarina's progress by land. I have not so extraordinary an opinion of what her fleet will do. Only seven of her ships have yet arrived on our coasts. They are sailed away to the Mediterranean. But I have not much faith in crusades; and yet I think they will do more than if *they* had faith.

I hear *ma belle Sœur** is at Lyons, and intends to visit us in the spring. I do not know why she should think the sea less tremendous in May than in September. Lord Pembroke is not yet returned, though replaced in the King's Bed-chamber. As he was turned out for running away with one young woman of fashion, I suppose he was restored for carrying off another.

Lord Bute is said to be extremely ill again, and to be again going abroad. The public will think his illness of the nature of Lord Holland's, a fever raised by the petitions. It is a proverb, that gold may be bought too dear. Favour and gold both cost dear at present. Wilkes and Madame du Barri are violent lessons of what the most unthought-of objects may bring about. Who, that saw either of them seven years ago, expected that England and France would talk of nothing else? Great men see nothing but the great that are in their way. Lord Bute, on the late King's death, apprehended no body but Lord Chatham. Methinks it would make a pretty Persian tale. Sultan Nourmanzor, a very potent monarch, was yet kept in continual alarms by the King of the Black Mountain, which hung over his territories, and from which he was threatened with daily invasion. He determined to deliver himself from so formidable an enemy, and assembling a mighty army, resolved to make himself master of the mountain. As he marched at the head of his troops, for he was a very brave Prince, he stumbled over a small pebble that lay in his way, and being unwieldy and encumbered with

* The Countess of Orford, Margaret Rolle.

his robes, he could not recover himself, but falling flat on his face, a prodigious diamond that was set in the front of his turban, was beaten into his forehead, and occasioned a dangerous wound. The unskilfulness of his surgeons rendered it mortal. The pebble was picked up and presented to the monarch of the mountain, and, by the superstition of the mountaineers, was reckoned an amulet, and preservative against all the dangers of the state, nor would they exchange it for the diamond that was the more immediate cause of the death of their enemy. The pebble could not have hurt him, if he had not possessed the diamond. Adieu!

LETTER CXLVI.

Arlington Street, Nov. 30, 1769.

If I had writ to you last week, I should have told you that the scene brightens up for the Court, the petitions begin to grow ridiculous, and that the Opposition have succeeded lately in no one material point. But as our climate is changeable, some new clouds have appeared in the sky. The Irish are the new actors, and will give trouble; though they began their session with a complaisance not much expected from them, considering how wrong their heads are. After voting the very necessary augmentation of three thousand men, they have thrown out a money bill, and it is a question whether their Parliament must not be prorogued with a high hand. As any national calamity is a gain to aspiring patriots, this *contretems* is very pleasing to ours. Then the talk of a war has done my Lord Chatham more good than hellebore. It is worth putting off a fit of madness, when one has a chance of being distracted upon a larger scale. I do not seriously think France ready for war, but we are strangely tempting; and as they outsee every thing they hear, they will be apt to think us in greater confusion than we are. Yet, if they have tolerable intelligence, they must know that we have a fleet to make their hearts ache. Our navy never was so formidable, and in such brilliant order.

By the letters you must have received, you will have found how punctual I have been from the moment of my return. I believe I have received all yours. The last shocked me with the account of the French barbarities in Corsica. Why are they not trumpeted all over Europe? Cowardice in the attack was too naturally followed by cruelty after conquest—yet we call Iroquois barbarians! I believe Choiseul thoroughly exasperated, but I did not think he had so feminine a mind. Nothing has answered but their diminutive triumph over the poor Corsicans. They are totally baffled in Sweden; and nothing ever answered worse than the holy Turkish war they have excited against the Czarina—yet methinks I wish her fleet was not so long hobbling into the Mediterranean! If the Pope has disappointed

France and Spain, he has done no more than I foretold. He imitated the lowly virtues of Sixtus Quintus before his exaltation too much, not to end a Jesuit. Is it true that he cites the King of Prussia as an intercessor for the order?

The Duc de Choiseul maintains his ground against the mistress. She has lately been so well bred as, when at whist with the King, to make faces at the Minister, if he was her partner. Solomon thought this a little too strong, and has reprimanded his beloved. Yet, considering that he loves canticles better than war, I should think she would recover her advantages if the Minister should involve the pacific monarch in another war.

You may imagine that we have no kind of news but politics, considering how much we have of the latter. It is our meat, drink, and clothing—meat to our printers, drink to our Ministers, who settle all over a bottle, and is intended for clothing to our patriots. We have always talked of the goodness of our constitution. It must be a very tough one, if it can stand all its distempers and all its physicians. The latter have not even the modesty of the Pharisees. None of them blush to cast the first stone at a sister sinner: nor does the sister obey the precept, Go and sin no more.

I have heard the true history of a certain Countess's uncertain wanderings. It seems, there is a Cavalier Mozzi, who, you must know, attends her perigrinations, as Cytheris did Antony's; but who not having it so much in his power to contribute to her pleasures, pleads very bad health, though even beyond the truth. I should not have thought her likely to be governed by an *epuisé*—but so it is. He has enriched himself to her cost, and fearing that her son might cross his interest, dragged her back twice from Calais. This came from a physician who accompanied them, and is now here; and who affirms that the cavalier often pressed him to be of parties at houses of pleasure, inconsistent with the fidelity of a true knight.

I believe I did not tell you how I was diverted at Paris with Monsieur d'Aubeterre, their late Ambassador at Rome. I was taking notice that all the new houses at Paris were built *à la Grecque*. He said, with all the contempt that ignorance feels when it takes itself for knowledge. "Bon! there is nothing in that: it is all stolen from the frieze of the Pantheon." With much difficulty I discovered that he thought the Doric fret comprehended all Greek architecture. This was after passing six years at Rome. As all other nations observe most what they have never seen before, the French never look but at what they have been used to see all their lives. If something foreign arrives at Paris, they either think they invented it, or that it has always been there. It is lucky for us that D'Aubeterres are common among them. Adieu!

LETTER CXLVII.

Arlington Street, Dec. 31, 1769.

I WROTE to you on the first of this month, and am now going to write on the last of it, to close a year that has laid so many ominous eggs. Whether the next will crush or hatch them, we shall soon have some chance of foreseeing. In some respects, the prospect is a little mended. The petitions have contracted an air of ridicule from the ridiculous undertakers that have been forced to parade into different counties to supply the place of all the gentlemen, who have disdained to appear and countenance them. Lord Chatham, however, who is so necessitous that he is forced to put to sea again, and to hope for a storm, dresses out the cause in as big words as he can; but as Wilkes's *virtue* is more in fashion than his lordship's *eloquence*, and as that martyr has quarrelled, in print, with both Demosthenes and Cicero, Chatham and Grenville, the latter two gain no popularity. The riots that were so hopefully nursed up against the execution of the weavers, were very nearly falling on the heads of the tribunes, Townshend and Sawbridge; and they were glad at the second to pacify the waves; *praestat componere*. Ireland, that was on the point of falling into the last confusion by a prorogation of the Parliament, which the Opposition had incurred the penalty of, by rejecting a trifling money-bill before the capital money-bills were passed, is saved by the prorogation being prudently deferred till this great object was carried, and a prorogation now would have very little consequence.

It is not less fortunate that the extreme distress of France prevents her from interfering (take notice I say *openly*) in our confusions. Monsieur du Chatelet is returned, as mild and pacific as if Sir Edward Hawke was lying before Brest with our late thunderbolt in his hand. Their distress for money is certainly extreme. Dinvaux, Choiseul's favourite Controller-General, has been forced to resign, *re infectâ*, and it is said that the Duc declined to name another, urging, that having recommended the last two to no purpose, he desired the chancellor might find one. As Maupeou is of the opposite faction, his naming the new Controller-General has but an ill look for the minister—at least it is plain that Choiseul sees the impossibility of making brick without straw, and chooses to miscarry no more. I have been told here, that even their army is unpaid. I may add, to the amendment of our prospect, that the city itself has taken alarm, and does not care to give itself up to the new levellers. The latter having attempted to change the Common-Council this Christmas, have not succeeded in carrying above eight new members.

This is all mighty well: symptoms are comforts, not cures. Opposition threatens, grave men shake their heads; many fancy they fear, and many do fear. The best observers see no attention, no sys-

tem, and truly very slender abilities in the opposite scale; yet I think the ferment will dissipate. I have seen the Pretender at Derby, the House of Lords striding to aristocracy at the end of the last reign, the Crown making larger steps at the beginning of this. The mob are now led on to the destruction of the constitution: why should the people, the least formidable part, though the most impetuous in the onset, be more successful than the other branches! The whole legislature, too, is now engaged in one cause.

Methinks these various vibrations of the scale show how excellently well the Constitution is poised. But what signifies anticipating what nine days will give some light into? Yet, Administration has a difficult game to play, when both great firmness and great temper are absolutely necessary. The licentiousness of abuse surpasses all example. The most savage massacre of private characters passes for sport; but we have lately had an attack made on the King himself, exceeding the North Briton. Such a paper has been printed by the famous Junius, whoever he is, that it would scarce have been written before Charles I. was in Carisbrook Castle. The Dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland are as little spared; the former for having taken a wife for himself—so says the North Briton; observe, *I* do not say so; and the latter, for having taken another man's—for opposite actions are equally criminal in the spectacles of Opposition, the two glasses of which are always made, the one to see black as white, the other white as black, and also both to see that white and black are both black. To be sure, the younger Highness has had the mishap of being surprised, at least *once*, with my Lady Grosvenor, who is actually discarded by her lord. Indeed there was none of that proof which my Lady Townshend once said there was in another case, when, being asked if there was any proof, she said, "Lord, child, she was all over proof." In the present case, the lovers were *only* locked into a room together.

Well! we are not singular. Another Junius has appeared in Portugal. There it seems they write satires with a club—the first instance, I suppose, of thrashing a King. His Majesty received two blows on his shoulder and his arm, intended, *à la Junienne*, at his head. The Queen instantly called for a gun to shoot the bruiser herself. "No," said the King, "arrest him." They tell a melancholy story for the assassin; that, having lost a commission, he gave a memorial to the King, who bade him give it to the Secretary at War, which the poor creature did not think a likely method of redress. He was then prosecuted for not paying his tax out of nothing. Despair carried him to the Fountain Head; yet I doubt M. d'Œyras will discover a plot, and lop some more noble heads. I have often said, and oftener think, *that this world is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel*—a solution of why Democritus laughed and Heraclitus wept. The only gainer is history, which has constant opportunities of showing the various ways in which men can contrive to be fools and knaves. The Record pretends to be written

for instruction, though to this hour no mortal has been the better or wiser for it. Adieu!

P.S. Jan. 2, 1770.

Last night we heard that the Lord-Lieutenant has prorogued the Irish Parliament for three months; but, fortunately, the money bills were passed first.

LETTER CXLVIII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 10th, 1770.

The great day is over, and you will not be sorry to hear the event of it in both Houses. Without doors every thing was quiet, except some cries in favour of Wilkes. Lord Chatham, who, *Lord Temple* said, was grown so violent that *he* could not *moderate* him, made his appearance and two long speeches, but, like an old beauty in an unfashionable dress, which became her in her youth, he found that his charms were no longer killing. Lord Mansfield answered his first speech, and Lord Sandwich defied any lord in the House to make sense out of the second. The object of the day was to create a breach between the two Houses, by an amendment proposed by Lord Chatham to the address in which the House should inquire into the grievance of the Middlesex election. Their Lordships were so little disposed to quarrel with their good brethren the Commons, though the Chancellor* himself laboured the point *against* the Court, that at ten at night the motion was rejected by a hundred and thirty-six. Old Myra, in her fardingale, will probably not expose herself again to neglect this session.

The other House sat till one in the morning, where the Court also triumphed; though Lord Granby and the Solicitor-General Dunning deserted to the minority; yet the latter were but 138 to 254. Thus ends the mighty bluster of petitions; which, notwithstanding all the noise and labour bestowed on them, have not yet been presented from about nine or ten counties of the fifty-two. They would come limping now to very little purpose. The most serious part is the defection of Lord Granby; for though he has sunk his character by so many changes, a schism in the army would be very unpleasant, especially as there are men bad enough to look towards rougher divisions than parliamentary. I hope the Ministers will have sense and temper enough to stop the progress of this wound. I shall not think them very wise if they dismiss the Chancellor. Such union in the whole legislature will reduce the present factions to insignificance, if not attended by presumption and excess of confidence. The clouds that hung over us are certainly dispelled by the success of yesterday; but,

* Lord Camden.

as folly assembled them, it may assemble them again. Yet, when I say clouds are dispersed, you will understand I mean only those vapours drawn up into petitions. Where so many caldrons full of passions are boiling, they are not extinguished by one wet sheet of votes.

Still it is most fortunate that France is so utterly unable to profit of our difficulties. Dinvaux, M. de Choiseul's favourite Controller-General, has been obliged to resign; yet I believe the defect of resources was more in their circumstances than in the man. Madame du Barri has been raining honours and preferments on her creatures; Madame de Mirepoix has obtained *les grandes entrées;* so has the Comte de Broglie; and Monsieur de Castries has had a new military post created for him. These look to me as signals fixed to warn the minister to resign.

Much, I own, I do not expect from the Russian fleet, though I do not believe in the great naval force which, the French pretend, is prepared at Constantinople. It will be unlucky for the faithful, if the Czarina does demolish the Ottoman Empire, that the present generation will not trouble themselves to prove this æra foretold by the Revelations. The abasement of the Pope is a terrible counterpart to such a triumph.

Friday, 12th.

Though the Court is singing Io Pæans, the campaign is far from being at an end. A most unheard-of attack has been made on the House of Commons. Sir George Savile,* a man of great fortune, spotless character, and acute though injudicious head, has twice told them to their faces that they sit illegally, having betrayed their trust, and that he was ready to receive the punishment for telling them so. Burke, not quite so rich, nor immaculate, but of better abilities, has twice said as much, and allowed that he ought to be sent to the Tower for what he said, but knew their guilt was too great to let them venture to commit him. Hitherto this language has been borne; but as there is not so great a mule as a martyr, I have no doubt but these two saints will insist on receiving the crown of glory; and, it is said, many more will demand the honour of sharing their cross. This will be a more respectable rubric than Wilkes's. We shall see whether Saints Simon and Jude, or St. Beelzebub will have most followers. Nay, but this is very unpleasant! It urges fast to sanguinary decision. I hear too that the victors will certainly dismiss the Chancellor, and that Lord Granby will resign in consequence. More and more madness! What has the Ministry and Parliament to do, but to lie by and let all the provocation take its rise from the opposite faction? Is it wise to furnish sedition with reasons?

There is a tolerable episode opened in Ireland, where the Lord-Lieutenant has been forced to prorogue the Parliament for three months; so nearly do we tread in the steps of 1641! I sit by, un-

* See Sir George Savile's Speech in Cavendish's Debates.—Ed.

connected with all parties, but viewing the whole with much concern, and wishing I could put my trust in any for delivering us out of these calamities; but I doubt it is too far gone to subside without a convulsion; and in what *can* a convulsion end but in the destruction of our constitution? What hopes has liberty, whether Charles or Oliver prevail? As some revolution may happen any day, be cautious for your own sake what you reply to me. I always say less than I could, because I consider how many post-house ordeals a letter must pass; and I am not desirous that our enemies should know more than it is vain to attempt to keep from them. Adieu!

LETTER CXLIX.

Arlington Street, Jan. 18, 1770.

Affairs are so serious, and in so critical a situation, that I am sure you would not think my letters too frequent if I wrote every post. Nothing proves the badness of generals, like an ill use of a great victory. Ours have not hurt their own success by neglecting to pursue it, but by pursuing it too far. Lord Huntingdon* was turned out the next day, not for having joined the enemy, but merely for having absented himself: for him he has played the fool; he has no strength of his own, and had no support but the King; and so falls unpitied. Lord Bristol† was immediately transferred from the Privy Seal to the Groom of the Stole. Lord Coventry,‡ already more than wavering towards the Opposition, seized that pretence of quarrelling, and resigned his post in the Bed-chamber.

A more unlucky event, is the resignation of the Duke of Beaufort,§ who took up the same minute for giving up his Mastership of the Horse to the Queen, because he could not wrench the lieutenancy of two Welsh counties from Morgan of Tredegar, the old Whig enemy of his house, and the more potent in Parliament. However, as the Duke was the first convert of his family from Jacobitism, his defection is to be lamented, and may carry back some of the Tories.

But the most imprudent step has been the dismission of the Chancellor, and that before any preparation was made for a successor. The Seals were indeed privately offered to Lord Mansfield, who refused them, but published the offer; and then to Mr. Yorke; but the Chancellor heard the news by common report, before he had received the least notification of his disgrace. Though I believe he did not intend to remain in office, these slights will not have soothed him. They have hurried on, too, the resignation of Lord Granby, who yesterday gave up the command of the Army and the Ordnance, only reserving his regiment of Blues.

* Francis Hastings.
† George William Hervey.
‡ George William Coventry.
§ Henry Somerset.

You may imagine how these events have raised the spirits and animosity of the Opposition; but the greatest blow is yet to come. Mr. Yorke, the night before last, absolutely declined the Seals, though the great object of his life and of his variations; but terror and Lord Rockingham pulled more forcibly the other way. There is nobody else; the Chief-Justice Wilmot's health will not allow him to take them, and the Attorney-General cannot be spared from the House of Commons, where it is supposed Dunning, the Solicitor-General, will follow his friend the Chancellor, especially as he spoke on the same side the first day. When the Seals go a-begging, and the army is abandoned by the popular general, you will not think the circumstances of Administration very flourishing. Well! you will not be more astonished than I was yesterday, at four o'clock, to hear that Mr. Yorke had just accepted, and is Chancellor. The rage of the Opposition speaks the importance of this acquisition to the Court. It will be great indeed if it stops the tide of resignations. The Ministers have gained still more time by an accident; the Speaker* has been seized with a paralytic disorder, and is thought dying. Yesterday he sent his resignation and mace to the House, which is accordingly adjourned to next Monday to consider of a successor, by which time, I suppose, the vacant employments will be filled up. No fewer than four earls have asked to be Master of the Horse to the Queen, Essex, Carlisle, Waldegrave, and Powis; a proof that things are not thought desperate. That the Opposition are so, and intend to make the nation so, is but too evident. Their speeches are outrageous, and it is not their fault that some of them have not been sent to the Tower. In short, the option seems to lie between the greatest violences, or a change of Administration and a dissolution of Parliament, the latter of which, I think, would not let in all other evils upon us.

Friday, 19th.

I had not time yesterday to finish my letter. The Court has recovered from its consternation and is taking measures of defence. Another great thorn is drawn out of its side, Sir Fletcher Norton, who vomited fire and flame on Yorke's promotion, having consented to be Speaker of the House of Commons. I do not yet hear whether the Opposition will set up a candidate for the chair against him. Nothing can exceed the badness of his character even in this bad age; yet I think he can do less hurt in the Speaker's chair than anywhere else. He has a roughness and insolence, too, which will not suffer the licentious speeches of these last days, and which his predecessor did not dare to reprimand. As sedition is the word, perhaps it is not unlucky that some capital rogues should be opposed to others; they know each other's weak parts.

A country is undone before people distinguish between affected and real virtue, and Cato is dead before any body minds him. I

* Sir John Cust.

could write a volume of reflections or comparisons, but to what purpose? Writings impel, but can restrain no body. Every Clodius of the hour takes the name of Cato to himself, and bestows his own name on his enemy. Truth surmounts but a hundred years afterwards; is then entombed in history, and appears as flat as, or less interesting than, the lies with which it is surrounded and has been overwhelmed. Every body talks of the Constitution, but all sides forget that the Constitution is extremely well, and would do very well, if they would but let it alone. Indeed it must be a strong constitution, considering how long it has been quacked and doctored. If it had a fever, it was a slow one. Its present physicians imitate the Faculty so servilely, that they seem to think the wisest step is to convert the slow fever into a high one; then, you know, the patient is easily cured—or killed.

Considering how much I have seen, perhaps I ought not to be so easily alarmed, but a by-stander is more apt to be serious than those who are heated and engaged in the game. I have the weakness of loving national glory; I exulted in the figure we made in the last war; but as I am connected with neither Court nor Opposition, I enjoy the triumphs of neither, which are made at the expense of the whole. Their squabbles divert us from attention to greater interests, and their views are confined to the small circle of themselves and friends. If the quarrel becomes very serious, one knows, whichever side prevails, the Crown in the long run must predominate; and what matters it which party or faction shall then be uppermost?

LETTER CL.

Arlington Street, Monday, Jan. 22, 1770.

WHAT a strange event! Though my letters tread on each other's heels, they can scarce keep up with the rapid motion of the times. Mr. Yorke is dead! yes, the new Chancellor! He kissed the King's hand for the Great Seal on Wednesday night, and expired between five and six on Saturday evening. It was Semele perishing by the lightnings she had longed for. When you have recovered your surprise, you will want to know the circumstances. I believe the following are nearly the truth. To be second Chancellor in succession in his own house had been the great object of Mr. Yorke's life; and his family were not less eager for it. This point had occasioned much uncertainty in their conduct. In general, they were attached to Lord Rockingham, but being decent, and naturally *legal*, they had given into none of the violences of their party, particularly on the petitions, all the brothers absenting themselves on the first day of the session. When the Great Seal, on the intended dismission of Lord Camden, was offered to Mr. Yorke, his connexions, and dread of abuse, weighed so strongly against his ambition, that he determined

to refuse it. Some say that his brother Lord Hadwicke advised; others, that he dissuaded the acceptance. Certain it is, that he had given a positive refusal both to the King and the Duke of Grafton, and that the Earl had notified it to Lord Rockingham. Within two hours after, the King prevailed on Yorke to accept.

The conflict occasioned in his mind by these struggles, working on a complexion that boiled over with blood, threw him into a high fever on Wednesday night, and a vomiting ensuing on Thursday morning, he burst a blood-vessel, and no art could save him. The Cerberus of Billingsgate had opened all its throats, but must shut them, for the poor man had accepted handsomely, without making a single condition for himself; I do not reckon the Peerage;* as a Chancellor must have it, or is a mute at the head of the House of Lords. The blow is heavy on the Administration. The Chief Justice Wilmot, it is thought, will be prevailed upon to accept the Seals, but at present they must be put into commission, for the Chancery cannot stand still.

You are a sort of man whom virtue can comfort under ill success, and therefore I will tell you what will charm you. The King offered the Mastership of the Ordnance, on Lord Granby's resignation, to Mr. Conway, who is only Lieutenant-General of it. He said he had lived in friendship with Lord Granby, and would not profit of his spoils; but, as he thought he could do some essential service in the office, where there are many abuses, if His Majesty would be pleased to let him continue as he is, he would do the business of the office without accepting the salary. The King replied, "you are a phenomenon! I can satisfy nobody else, and you will not take even what is offered to you." I believe his Majesty would not find the same difficulty with many patriots. As extremes meet, even Sir Fletcher Norton acts moderation. He was destined for Speaker of the House of Commons. On Yorke's death, it was expected that he would again push to be Chancellor. No such thing: he says he will not avail himself of the distresses of Government; but, having consented to be Speaker, will remain so; and is to be installed to-day, the Opposition not being able to find a concurrent. There!—there is Cassius as self-denying as Brutus! Lord Waldegrave† is Master of the Horse to the Queen: the other employments are not yet filled; but, as I begin my letter to-day, and it is not to set out till to-morrow, I may have half a volume more to write, if the times keep up the same tone of vivacity.

Tuesday.

Sir Fletcher Norton is Speaker. Two or three of the Opposition, only to mark their disgust to him, proposed the younger Thomas Townshend, one as little qualified for the office as you are, and whose consent they had not asked. He disavowed them, and Sir Fletcher was chosen by 237 to 121: exactly the same majority as on the first

* Lord Morden: but he died three days before the patent could be made out.—Ed.
† John third Earl of Waldegrave.

day; so that the Court maintains its strength, notwithstanding so many unfavourable accidents. The same day, Lord Rockingham wretchedly, and Lord Chatham, in his old brilliant style, moved, to inquire into the state of the nation, which was not opposed, and is to be discussed on Thursday.

In the meantime, resignations revive. Dunning, the Solicitor-General; Hussey, Attorney-General to the Queen; James Grenville, Vice-Treasurer to the Queen, and two Lords of the Admiralty, have given up their places; and, what is worse, no Chancellor is to be found. Lord Chatham, who, four years and a half ago, was turned out of Lord Rockingham's house, has been to wait on the latter, and they are the best friends in the world, as far as common hostility can make them; but the marquis is firm in insisting on the Treasury, which the Grenvilles will not waive. It is a most distracted scene! People cry where will it end? I say, where will it begin? I know where it will end; in the destruction of this free constitution.

Should any thing happen, I shall write to you with more circumspection. I condemn both sides, or rather, all sides. I have not a connexion with any thing called Minister; but as the well-being of the House of Commons depends on this Administration, I must wish their success. If the House of Commons is blasted by authority, what is left? Must we pass through a mob Parliament to confusion, and thence to absolute power? I tremble. Adieu!

P.S. If the Parliament is dissolved, Lord Chatham and Lord Rockingham may separately flatter themselves, but the next Parliament will be Wilkes's.

LETTER CLI.

Arlington Street, Jan. 30, 1770.

I Do not know how the year will end, but, to be sure, it begins with as many events as ever happened to any one of its predecessors. The Duke of Grafton has resigned: in a very extraordinary moment indeed; in the midst of his own measures, in the midst of a session, and undefeated. It is true, his last victory was far from being so complete as the former; and hence, as Horatio says,* *have the talkers of this populous city* taken occasion to impute this sudden retreat to as sudden a panic. You must know, that last Friday, upon a question on that endless topic, the Middlesex election, the Court had a majority, at past three in the morning, of only four and forty. The expulsion of the Chancellor, the resignation of Lord Granby, and of so many others, and much mal-adroitness in stating the question on the Court-side, easily accounted for that diminution in the numbers; and yet, though I believe that that defalcation determined this step, I know it

* Not Horatio, but the Fair Penitent.—Ed.

was not a new thought. Whenever the current did not run smooth, his Grace's first thought has been to resign. When Mr. Yorke refused to accept, the fit returned violently: when he did accept, the wind changed; and I believe I gave you an obscure hint of the extreme importance of that acceptance. Mr. Yorke's precipitate death unhinged all again; the impossibility of finding another Chancellor fixed the wind in the resigning corner, and the slender majority overset the vessel quite. In short, it is over. A very bad temper, no conduct, and obstinacy always ill-placed, have put an end to his Grace's administration.

What will follow is impossible to say. In the meantime Lord North is first Minister. He is much more able, more active, more assiduous, more resolute, and more fitted to deal with mankind. But whether the apparent, nay glaring timidity of the Duke may not have spread too general an alarm, is more than probable; and there is but the interval of to-day to take any measures, as the question of Friday must be reported to the House to-morrow; whence, at least, the lookers-out may absent themselves till the trump is turned up. The fear of a dissolution of Parliament may keep a large number together, and the fluctuation of probability between Lord North, Lord Chatham, and Lord Rockingham, may occasion a confusion of which the Government may profit. The King, in the meantime, is much to be pitied; abandoned where he had most confidence, and attacked on every other side. I write to-day, because the post goes out, and I choose to give you the earliest intelligence of such a material event; but the letter I shall certainly send you on Friday, will tread upon a little firmer ground.

I have received an odd indirect overture myself, not from Administion nor Opposition, but from France. M. de Choiseul has a great desire that I should be ambassador at that Court. As no man upon earth is less a Frenchman, as you know, than I am, I did not at all taste the proposal, nay, not his making it. I sent him word in plain terms that he could not have desired a person that would suit him less; that whatever private connexions or friendships I have in France, however grateful I may be for the kindness I have met with there, yet, the moment I should be Ambassador, he would find me more haughty and inflexible than all the English put together; and that though I wish for peace between the two countries, I should be much more likely to embroil them than preserve union, for that nothing upon earth could make me depart from the smallest punctilio, in which the honour of my nation should be concerned. I do not think he will desire me to be sent thither.

As this letter is but a prologue to the ensuing scenes, you will excuse my making it short. You may depend on my frequency till things are settled into system. Adieu!

LETTER CLII.

Arlington Street, Friday, Feb. 2, 1770.

Wednesday, the very critical day is over, and the Administration stands. The Opposition flattered themselves with victory, and the warmest friends of the Court expected little better than a drawn battle, yet the majority for the latter was forty. Few enough in conscience for triumph, but sufficient to make a stand with. Lord North pleased all that could bring themselves to be pleased: he not only spoke with firmness and dignity, but with good-humour; and fairly got the better of Colonel Barré, who attacked him with rudeness and brutality. Lord North has very good parts, quickness, great knowledge, and, what is as much wanted, activity. The impraticability of the Duke of Grafton's temper had contributed more to the present crisis than all the labours of all the factions. His friends were more discontented with him than even his enemies were. It was impossible to choose a more distressful moment than he selected for quitting; and had the scale turned on Wednesday, I do not know where we should have been. The House of Commons contradicting itself, a reversal of the Middlesex election, a dissolution of Parliament, or the King driven to refuse it in the face of a majority! I protest I think some fatal event must have happened. Let the Constitution but be saved, the factions may squabble as they please. They are engaged at this moment at the House of Lords, but that is a very bloodless scene: my Lord Chatham will make as little impression there as in his expeditions to the coast of France.

The people are perfectly quiet, and seem to have delegated all their anger to their representatives—*a proof that their representatives had instructed their constituents to be angry.* Wilkes is never mentioned, but as his name occurs in the debates on the Middlesex election. Yet I am far from thinking this Administration solidly seated. Any violence, or new provocation, may dislodge it at once. When they could reduce a majority of a hundred and sixteen to forty, in three weeks, their hold seems to be very slippery.

In the meantime, what a figure do we make in Europe! Who can connect with us? Nobody will. Nay, who can treat with us? Is every secret of every court to pass through the hands of every cabal in England? This goes to my heart, who, you know, wish to dictate to all the world, and to sit, a private citizen, in the Capitol, with more haughtiness than an Asiatic monarch. All public ambition is lost in personal. It would soothe my pride a thousand times more to be great *by* my country than *in* it. It would flatter me more to talk on foot to Paris, and be reverenced as an Englishman, than to go thither Ambassador, with the Garter. This might have been! but it past; and what signifies all the rest? I was born with Roman insolence, and live *in fæce Romuli!*

The vivacity of this last month has so multiplied my letters, that their number must excuse the shortness of them.

If the present system settles into any stability, I shall relapse into my *monthly family-duty*. Should fresh changes happen, you are sure of being advertised. That strange event, Mr. Yorke's death, is already history, that is, forgotten. We give few things time to grow stale.

Where is the Russian fleet? The ships drop in, one by one, like schoolboys after their holidays; and none of them, I doubt, perfect in their lesson.

Our schoolboys, at least those just come from school, are much more expeditious.

The gaming at Almack's, which has taken the *pas* of White's, is worthy the decline of our Empire, or Commonwealth, which you please. The young men of the age lose five, ten, fifteen thousand pounds in an evening there. Lord Stavordale,* not one-and-twenty, lost eleven thousand there, last Tuesday, but recovered it by one great hand at hazard: he swore a great oath,—"Now, if I had been playing *deep*, I might have won millions." His cousin, Charles Fox shines equally there and in the House of Commons. He was twenty-one yesterday se'nnight; and is already one of our best speakers. Yesterday he was made a Lord of the Admiralty. We are not a great age, but surely we are tending to some great revolution. Adieu!

LETTER CLIII.

Arlington Street, February 27, 1770.

It is very lucky, seeing how much of the tiger enters into the human composition, that there should be a good dose of the monkey too. If Æsop had not lived so many centuries before the introduction of masquerades and operas, he would certainly have anticipated my observation, and worked it up into a capital fable. As we still trade upon the stock of the ancients, we seldom deal in any other manufacture; and, though nature, after new combinations, lets forth new characteristics, it is very rarely that they are added to the old fund; else how could so striking a remark have escaped being made, as mine, on the joint ingredients of tiger and monkey? In France the latter predominates, in England the former; but, like Orozmades and Arimanius, they get the better by turns. The bankruptcy in France, and the rigours of the new Controller-General, are half forgotten, in the expectation of a new opera at the new theatre. Our civil war has been lulled asleep by a subscription masquerade; for which the House of Commons literally adjourned yesterday. Instead of Fairfaxes and Cromwells, we have had a crowd of Henry the Eighths, Wolseys, Vandykes, and Harlequins; and because Wilkes

* Eldest son of Stephen Fox, first Earl of Ilchester.

was not mask enough, we had a man dressed like him, with a visor, in imitation of his squint, and a Cap of Liberty on a pole. In short, sixteen or eighteen young lords have given the town a masquerade; and politics, for the last fortnight, were forced to give way to habit-makers. The ball was last night at Soho; and, if possible, was more magnificent than the King of Denmark's. The bishops opposed: he of London formally remonstrated to the King who did not approve it, but could not help him. The consequence was, that four divine vessels belonging to the holy fathers, alias their wives, were at this masquerade. Monkey again! A fair widow,* who once bore my whole name, and now bears half of it, was there, with one of those† whom the newspapers call *great personages*—he dressed like Edward the Fourth, she like Elizabeth Woodville, in gray and pearls, with a black veil. Methinks it was not very difficult to find out the meaning of those masks.

As one of my ancient passions, formerly, was masquerades, I had a large trunk of dresses by me. I dressed out a thousand young Conways‡ and Cholmondeleys,§ and went with more pleasure to see them pleased than when I formerly delighted in that diversion myself. It has cost me a great headach, and I shall probably never go to another. A symptom appeared of the change that has happened in the people.

The mob was beyond all belief: they held flambeaux to the windows of every coach, and demanded to have the masks pulled off and put on at their pleasure, but with extreme good-humour and civility. I was with my Lady Hertford and two of her daughters, in their coach: the mob took me for Lord Hertford, and huzzaed and blessed me! One fellow cried out, "Are you for Wilkes?" another said, "D—n you, you fool, what has Wilkes to do with a masquerade?"

In good truth, that stock is fallen very low. The Court has recovered a majority of seventy-five in the House of Commons; and the party has succeeded so ill in the Lords, that my Lord Chatham has betaken himself to the gout, and appears no more. What Wilkes may do at his enlargement in April, I don't know, but his star is certainly much dimmed. The distress of France, the injustice they have been induced to commit on public credit, immense bankruptcies, and great bankers hanging and drowning themselves, are comfortable objects in our prospect; for one tiger is charmed if another tiger loses his tail.

There was a stroke of the monkey last night that will sound ill in the ears of your neighbour the Pope. The heir-apparent‖ of the House of Norfolk, a drunken old mad fellow, was, though a Catholic,

* Maria Walpole, Countess Dowager of Waldegrave; secondly married to (†) William Henry Duke of Gloucester. Edward IV. married the widow of Lord Gray.

‡ Sons of Francis, Earl of Hertford, Mr. Walpole's cousin german.

§ Mr. Walpole's nephews.

‖ Charles Howard; afterwards Duke of Norfolk.

dressed like a cardinal: I hope he was scandalized at the wives of our bishops.

So you agree with me, and don't think that the crusado from Russia will recover the Holy Land! It is a pity; for, if the Turks keep it a little longer, I doubt it will be the Holy Land no longer. When Rome totters, poor Jerusalem! As to your Count Orloff's denying the murder of the late Czar, it is no more than every felon does at the Old Bailey. If I could write like Shakspeare, I would make Peter's ghost perch on the dome of Sancta Sophia, and when the Russian fleet comes in sight, roar, with a voice of thunder that should reach to Petersburgh,

"Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!"

We have had two or three simpletons return from Russia charmed with the murderess, believing her innocent, *because* she spoke graciously to *them* in the drawing-room. I don't know what the present Grand Signior's name is, Osman, or Mustapha, or what, but I am extremely on his side against Catharine of Zerbst; and I never intend to ask him for a farthing, nor write penegyrics on him for pay, like Voltaire and Diderot; so you need not say a word to him of my good wishes. Benedict XIV., deserved my friendship, but being a sound Protestant, one would not, you know, make all Turk and Pagan and Infidel princes too familiar. Adieu!

LETTER CLIV.

Arlington Street, March 15, 1770.

The troubles that seemed to have a little subsided, or that were, at least, repelled by the vigorous majorities in Parliament, have again broken out, and (like flames blown backward) with redoubled violence. As a prelude to what was to follow, rather as the word of battle, Lord Chatham some days ago declared to the Lords, that there is a *secret influence* (meaning the Princess) more mighty than Majesty itself, and which had betrayed or clogged every succeeding administration. His own had been sacrificed by it. In consequence of this denunciation, papers, to which the North Britons were milk and honey, have been published in terms too gross to repeat. *The Whisperer* and the *Parliamentary Spy* are their titles. Every blank wall at this end of the town is scribbled with the words, *Impeach the King's Mother;* and, in truth, I think her person in danger.

But the manifesto on which all seems to turn, is the remonstrance from the City. You will have seen it in the public papers, and certainly never saw a bolder declaration both against the King and Parliament. Sixteen aldermen have protested against it, but could not stop it. The King, after some delay, received it yesterday on

his throne. It was brought by the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, accompanied by an immense multitude, decently however, except in hissing as they passed Carlton House.* A few days ago, when the Sheriffs went to demand the acceptance of it, both Townshend and Sawbridge, it is said, behaved with provoking disrespect. The King read his answer with great dignity and calmness, and it was indeed drawn with extreme temper and firmness. Had as prudent an answer been given to the petitions, instead of mocking the people† with that nonsense on the horned cattle, much ill humour had been prevented.

The crisis is now tremendous. Should the House of Commons, or both Houses, fall on the Remonstrance as it in a manner dares them to do, it is much to be apprehended that not only the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs will uphold their act, but that many lords and members will avow them, and demand to be included in the same sentence. The Tower, crammed with such proud criminals, will be a formidable scene indeed. The petitioning counties will certainly turn remonstrants. An association among them is threatened, and a general refusal by the party of paying the land-tax. In short, rebellion is in prospect, and in every body's mouth. I, you know, have long foretold, that if some lenient measures were not applied, the confusion would grow too mighty to be checked.

It is not yet, I hope, too late for wisdom and temper to step in. I sigh when I hear any other language. The English may be soothed—I never read that they were to be frightened. The experience of ten years has shown, that harshness, and standing on the letter of defence, has but added to the ill-humour of the times. I have a great opinion of Lord Lord North's prudence, and by the answer to the Remonstrance, I conceive that he sees the true and only means of quieting those distempers, it *being much easier for a King of England to disarm the minds of his subjects than their hands.* This is my creed, and all our history supports it.

Friday, 16th.

I was interrupted yesterday, since when the die is cast. Sir Thomas Clavering moved to address the King to lay the Remonstrance and his Answer before the House. The Lord Mayor, the two Sheriffs, and Alderman Trecothick avowed the hand they had had in that outrageous paper. Fortunately, no more members took the same part, and some of the best condemned it. The House, you may imagine, was full of resentment, and at eleven at night the Address was carried by 271 to 108: a vast majority in the present circumstances, and composed, as you may guess, of many who abandoned the Opposition. The great point is still in suspense—what to do with the offenders. The wisest, because the most temperate, method that I have heard suggested is, to address the King to order a

* The residence of the Princess Dowager in Pall Mall.
† In the King's speech.

prosecution by the Attorney-General. Two others that have been mentioned, are big with every mischief—the Tower, or expulsion. Think of the first three magistrates of the city in prison, or of a new election for London! I pray for temper, but what can one expect when such provocation is given? I will write to you again next week, and I wish to send you better news. I forget whether it was King David or King Solomon said it, but I often think of the wisdom of that expression, *A soft word turneth away anger.*

Pray be upon your guard against the person who told you that Johnson was the author of the false alarm. I believe he is; but the person* who told you so is a most worthless and dangerous fellow, and capable of any mischief. Adieu!

LETTER CLV.

Arlington Street, March 23, 1770.

Our storms rather loiter than disperse; but they have deceived me so often, that if I thought them blown over, I should be cautious of saying so. Lord North's temper and prudence has prevailed over much rash council; and will, I hope, at last, defeat the madness of both sides. There has not been much heat in the House of Commons. The Rockingham faction has left Lord Chatham's aground, and would not defend the indecency of the Remonstrance. This alarmed my Lord Mayor, and though he affected to keep up his spirit, it sunk visibly. The House, you may be sure, resented the insult offered to them, and the majorities have been very great; yet has there been no personal punishment or censure, no dubbing of martyrs. The country gentlemen have even declared, that they will support the Court in no violence. This is very happy, at a time when the first overt act of violence on either side may entail long bloodshed upon us. The disavowal has given Lord Chatham a real or political fit of the gout; and he neither appeared yesterday in the House of Lords, when an address to the King against the Remonstrance was voted, nor at a sumptuous dinner and ball, given to the Opposition by the Lord Mayor. They passed in solemn procession, escorted by the Liverymen of London on horseback, from the Thatched-House Tavern, near St. James's, to the Mansion House, amidst thousands of people. At night, a small drunken mob, consisting, I believe, chiefly of glaziers and tallow-chandlers, obliged some houses at Charing Cross to put out some lights, and broke some windows, but dispersed of themselves in a quarter of an hour. These follies, however, exasperate; and both sides, I fear grow too angry not to be glad to be enraged at any trifle: the chiefs of both not considering that, like other projectors, the first inventors of mischief never reap the profit. Laud, Strafford, Hampden, Pym, all perished before their manufactures were crowned with success. Cromwell and Clarendon, who came into their shops, got all the business.

* Smollett.

Our weather is as perverse as the rest of the season. We have had a hard frost above this fortnight, which they say has killed all the peas and beans; but so they say every year, and of the fruit too. I suppose, if so much were not destroyed, we should be devoured by peas, beans, and apricots.

Lord Beauchamp has desired I would trouble you with a commission; it is to send him about six dozen of wine of Aleatico, and four dozen of the white Verdea. I knew you would undertake it with pleasure; you must draw upon me for the money, and I will pay your brother.

You know I have always some favourite, some successor of Patapan.* The present is a tanned black spaniel, called Rosette. She saved my life last Saturday night, so I am sure you will love her too. I was undressing for bed. She barked and was so restless that there was no quieting her. I fancied there was somebody under the bed, but there was not. As she looked at the chimney, which roared much, I thought it was the wind, yet wondered, as she had heard it so often. At last, not being able to quiet her, I looked to see what she barked at, and perceived sparks of fire falling from the chimney, and on searching farther perceived it in flames. It had not gone far, and we easily extinguished it. I wish I had as much power over the nation's chimney. Adieu!

LETTER CLVI.

Arlington Street, Thursday, April 19, 1770.

The day so much apprehended of Wilkes's enlargement is passed without mischief. He was released late the night before last, and set out directly for the country. Last night several shops and private houses were illuminated, from affection, or fear of their windows, but few of any distinction, except the Duke of Portland's. Falling amidst the drunkenness of Easter week, riots were the more to be expected; yet none happened. Great pains had been taken to station constables, and the Light Horse were drawn nearer to town, in case of emergency. The Lord Mayor had enjoined tranquillity—as Mayor. As Beckford, his own house in Soho-square, was embroidered with "*Liberty*," in white letters three feet high. Luckily, the evening was very wet, and not a mouse stirred.

However, this delivery may give date to a fresh era. Wilkes has printed manifestoes against the House of Commons, designs to be sworn in as Alderman, and, they say, to demand his seat in Parliament. An approaching event will favour his designs. Lord Sandys has been overturned, and has fractured his skull. The succession of his son to the title vacates the seat of the latter for Westminster, and opens a new scene of rioting. Wilkes will not stand himself, adhering to

* A favourite dog Mr. Walpole brought from Rome.

his pretensions for Middlesex, but may name whom he pleases. The Court, I should think, would not oppose his nominee; and in that case there may be the less tumult.

Well! we must see now what turn this man's destiny will take: whether he will persist, and if he does, what the event will be; or whether he will not be abandoned by degrees, and sink into obscurity. Except as a mere tool of faction, he has lost all hold but with the lower part of the people, while his own vanity and obstinacy make him most important in his own eyes, and may in reality have made him an enthusiast. Monsieur de la Chalotais, a man of real principles, does not triumph less. He has driven his tyrant, the Duc d'Aiguillon, to demand a trial, and it is now going on before the King at Versailles; an unprecedented compliment, and evidence of the Duke's favour. Yet he is fallen into a jaundice with vexation, after receiving a noble rebuff from the oppressed. Duclos was sent with the offer of 400,000 livres, of erecting his estate into a marquisate, and of ensuring the place of Procureur-General* to his son. La Chalotais was in bed when Duclos drew his curtains; he said immediately, "Mon ami, j'espère que vous ne venez pas me proposer des bassesses?" He refused every thing; said he would persist in pursuing his oppressor for his own vindication till he had not a *sillon* left, and hoped his children would have spirit enough to go on with the suit. Such offers speak the innocence of the sufferer; and yet, having read the procedure, I think there is not the least probability in one of the charges, that of an attempt to have La Chalotais poisoned. It is glorious, however, to find that even in France the loftiest criminals cannot escape from the cry of the public!

One of the King's daughters† is gone into a convent of Carmelites—the youngest. The King refused his consent for three months. Had he had as much more sense as was necessary, he should have abolished the order *in terrorem*, for I take for granted this is a machine played off by Mother Church to revive her credit.

Do you know that I am much scandalized by a paragraph in your last, where you say the Czarina was reduced to murder her husband by the option between that crime and a great empire? Is it possible that you can have given credit to the tales of her very accomplices? There was not a shadow of probability that the Czar intended to put her to death. His nature was most humane and beneficent, and her antecedent and subsequent murders too glaring and horrid proofs of her blackness, to leave one any doubt. There is great reason to believe she poisoned the late Czarina; and none but such simpletons as we have sent to Petersburgh, can be imposed on by the gross denial of her hand in the massacre of the Czar John.

My dear sir, leave it to Voltaire and the venal learned to apologize for that wretched woman. I am not dazzled with her code of laws, nor her fleets in the Archipelago. La Chalotais, in prison or exile, is venerable. Catharine will be detestable, though she should be

* Procureur-General of the Parliament of Bretagne.
† Madame Louise.

crowned in St. Sophia, and act a farce of Christianity there. Pray deny her place in so pure a heart as your own. The proper punishment of mighty criminals is their knowing that they are, and must be for ever despised by the good. Adieu!

LETTER CLVII.

Strawberry Hill, May. 6, 1770.

I Don't know whether Wilkes is subdued by his imprisonment, or waits for the rising of Parliament, to take the field; or whether his dignity of Alderman has dulled him into prudence, and the love of feasting; but hitherto he has done nothing but go to city-banquets and sermons, and sit at Guildhall as a sober magistrate. What an inversion of the proverb, "Si ex quovis Mercurio fit lignum!" What do you Italians think of Harlequin Podestâ? In truth, his party is crumbled away strangely. Lord Chatham has talked on the Middlesex election till nobody will answer him; and Mr. Burke, Lord Rockingham's governor, has published a pamphlet that has sown the utmost discord between that faction and the supporters of the Bill of Rights. Mrs. Macaulay has written against it. In Parliament their numbers are shrunk to nothing, and the session is ending very triumphantly for the Court. But there is another scene opened of a very different aspect. You have seen the accounts from Boston. The tocsin seems to be sounded to America. I have many visions about that country, and fancy I see twenty empires and republics forming upon vast scales over all that continent, which is growing too mighty to be kept in subjection to half a dozen exhausted nations in Europe. As the latter sinks, and the others rise, they who live between the æras will be a sort of Noahs, witnesses to the period of the old world and origin of the new. I entertain myself with the idea of a future senate in Carolina and Virginia, where their patriots will harangue on the austere and incorruptible virtue of the ancient English! will tell their auditors of our disinterestedness and scorn of bribes and pensions, and make us blush in our graves at their ridiculous panegyrics. Who knows but even our Indian usurpations and villanies may become topics of praise to American schoolboys? As I believe our virtues are extremely like those of our predecessors the Romans, so I am sure our luxury and extravagance are too.

What do you think of a winter-Ranelagh* erecting in Oxford Road, at the expense of sixty thousand pounds? The new bank, including the value of the ground, and of the houses demolished to make room for it, will cost three hundred thousand; and erected, as my Lady Townley† says, *by sober citizens too!* I have touched

* The Pantheon. † In the comedy of the Provoked Husband.

before to you on the incredible profusion of our young men of fashion. I know a younger brother who literally gives a flower-woman half a guinea every morning for a bunch of roses for the nosegay in his button-hole. There has lately been an auction of stuffed birds; and, as natural history is in fashion, there are physicians and others who paid forty and fifty guineas for a single Chinese pheasant: you may buy a live one for five. After this, it is not extraordinary that pictures should be dear. We have at present three exhibitions. One West, who paints history in the taste of Poussin, gets three hundred pounds for a piece not too large to hang over a chimney. He has merit, but is hard and heavy, and far unworthy of such prices. The rage to see these exhibitions is so great, that sometimes one cannot pass through the streets where they are. But it is incredible what sums are raised by mere exhibitions* of any thing; a new fashion, and to enter at which you pay a shilling or half-a-crown. Another rage, is for prints of English portraits: I have been collecting them above thirty years, and originally never gave for a mezzotinto above one or two shillings. The lowest are now a crown; most, from half a guinea to a guinea. Lately, I assisted a clergyman† in compiling a catalogue of them; since the publication, scarce heads in books, not worth threepence, will sell for five guineas. Then we have Etruscan vases,‡ made of earthenware, in Staffordshire, from two to five guineas; and *or moulu*, never made here before, which succeeds so well, that a tea-kettle, which the inventor offered for one hundred guineas, sold by auction for one hundred and thirty. In short, we are at the height of extravagance and improvements, for we do improve rapidly in taste as well as in the former. I cannot say so much for our genius. Poetry is gone to bed, or into our prose; we are like the Romans in that too. If we have the arts of the Antonines,—we have the fustian also.

Well! what becomes of your neighbours, the Pope and Turk? is one Babylon to fall, and the other to moulder away? I begin to tremble for the poor Greeks; they will be sacrificed like the Catalans, and left to be impaled for rebellion, as soon as that vain-glorious woman the Czarina has glutted her lust of fame, and secured Asoph by a peace, which I hear is all she insists on keeping. What strides modern ambition takes! *We* are the successors of Aurengzebe; and a virago under the Pole sends a fleet into the Ægean Sea to rouse the ghosts of Leonidas and Epaminondas, and burn the capital of the second Roman Empire! Folks now scarce meddle with their next door neighbours; as many English go to visit St. Peters, who never thought of stepping into St. Paul's.

I shall let Lord Beauchamp know your readiness to oblige him, probably to-morrow, as I go to town. The spring is so backward

* What would Horace Walpole have said to the great number of these sources of amusement in our days,—picture-galleries, dioramas, panoramas, cosmoramas, zoological gardens, and industrious fleas!—Ed.

† Mr. Granger's work entitled "Biographical History."

‡ By the celebrated Wedgwood.—Ed.

here that I have little inducement to stay; not an entire leaf is out on any tree, and I have heard a syren as much as a nightingale. Lord Fitzwilliam, who, I suppose is one of your latest acquaintance, is going to marry Lady Charlotte Ponsonby, Lord Besborough's second daughter, a pretty, sensible and very amiable girl. I seldom tell you that sort of news, but when the parties are very fresh in your memory. Adieu!

LETTER CLVIII.

Arlington Street, May 24, 1770.

Not only the session is at an end, but I think the Middlesex election too, which my lord Chatham has heated and heated so often over, that there is scarce a spark of fire left. The City, indeed, carried a new remonstrance yesterday, garnished with my lord's own ingredients, but much less hot than the former. The Court, however, was put into some confusion by my Lord Mayor,* who, contrary to all form and precedent, tacked a volunteer speech to the Remonstrance. It was wondrous loyal and respectful, but being an innovation, much discomposed the solemnity. It is always usual to furnish a copy of what is to be said to the King, that he may be prepared with his answer. In this case, he was reduced to tuck up his train, jump from the throne, and take sanctuary in his closet, or answer extempore, which is not part of the royal trade; or sit silent and have nothing to reply. This last was the event, and a position awkward enough in conscience. Wilkes did not appear. When he misses such an opportunity of being impertinent, you may imagine that his spirit of Martyrdom is pretty well burnt out. Thus has the winter, which set out with such big black clouds, concluded with a prospect of more serenity than we have seen for some time. Lord Camden, Lord Granby, Lord Huntingdon, and the Duke of Northumberland, have no great cause to be proud of the finesse of their politics, and Lord Chatham has met with nothing but miscarriages and derision. Disunion has appeared between all parts of the Opposition, and unless experience teaches them to unite more heartily during the summer, or the Court commits any extravagance, or Ireland or America furnishes new troubles, you may compose yourself to tranquillity in your representing ermine, and take as good a nap as any monarch in Europe.

During this probable lethargy, I shall take my leave of you for some time, without writing only to make excuses for having nothing to say, which I have made for so many summers, and which I cannot make even so well as I have done. My pen grows very old, and is not so foolish as to try to conceal it; and if Gil Blas were to tell me that my parts, even small as they were, decay, I should not

* Alderman Beckford. He died on the 21st of June of this year.—Ed.

resent it like his archbishop, nor turn away the honest creature for having perceived what I have found out myself for some time. As my memory, however, is still good, you may depend upon hearing from me again, when I have any thing worth telling you. One can always write a gazette, and I am not too proud to descend to any office for your service. Adieu!

LETTER CLIX.

Arlington Street, June 15, 1770.

I HAVE no public event to tell you, though I write again sooner than I purposed. The journey of the Princess Dowager to Germany is indeed an extraordinary circumstance, but besides its being a week old, as I do not know the motives, I have nothing to say upon it. It is much canvassed and sifted, and yet perhaps she was only in search of a little repose from the torrents of abuse that have been poured upon her for some years. Yesterday they publicly sung about the streets a ballad, the burden of which was, *the cow has left her calf.* With all this we are grown very quiet, and Lord North's behaviour is so sensible and moderate that he offends no body.

Our family has lost a branch, but I cannot call it a misfortune. Lord Cholmondeley* died last Saturday. He was seventy, and had a constitution to have carried him to a hundred, if he had not destroyed it by an intemperance, especially in drinking, that would have killed any body else in half the time. As it was, he had outlived by fifteen years all his set, who have reeled into the ferry-boat so long before him. His grandson seems good and amiable, and though he comes into but a small fortune for an earl, five-and-twenty hundred a-year, his uncle the general may re-establish him upon a great footing—but it will not be in his life, and the general does not sail after his brother on a sea of claret.

You have heard details, to be sure, of the horrible catastrophe at the fire-works at Paris.† Francès, the French minister, told me the other night that the number of the killed was so great that they now try to stifle it; my letters say between five and six hundred! I think there were not fewer than ten coach-horses trodden to death. The mob had poured down from the *Etoile* by thousands and ten thousands to see the illuminations, and did not know the havoc they were occasioning. The impulse drove great numbers into the Seine, and those met with the most favourable deaths.

This is a slight summer letter, but you will not be sorry it is so short, when the dearth of events is the cause. Last year I did not

* George, third Earl of Cholmondeley, married Mary, daughter of Sir Robert Walpole.

† Those on the marriage of the Dauphin, afterwards the unfortunate Louis XVI. See all the memoirs of the times for the horrible details.

know but we might have a battle of Edghill by this time. At present, my Lord Chatham could as soon raise money as raise the people; and Wilkes will not much longer have more power of doing either. If you were not busy in burning Constantinople, you could not have a better opportunity for taking a trip to England. Have you never a wish this way? Think what satisfaction it would be to me?—but I never advise; nor let my own inclinations judge for my friends. I had rather suffer their absence, than to have to reproach myself with having given them bad counsel. I therefore say no more on what would make me so happy. Adieu!

LETTER CLX.

Strawberry Hill, July 26, 1770.

Are you not glad to have been so long without hearing from me? Your ministerial blood has had time to cool, and settle into the channels of representative dignity. Instead of Wilkes having been so, it looks as if Beckford had been the firebrand of politics, for the flame has gone out entirely since his death,

"And corn grows now where Troy town stood:"

both country gentlemen and farmers are thinking of their harvest, not of petitions and remonstrances.

Yet, don't think I write merely to tell you that I have nothing to tell you. If I have nothing to tell, I have something to ask—something that you would grant without my asking, and yet that you will like to do because I ask it. In short, not to convert my request into a riddle, the Duke of Newcastle's eldest son, Lord Lincoln, is going to your Florence, and his father has desired my recommendation. I have represented how little occasion there could be for my interposition; you knew his father, are obliging to every body, and attentive to such rank. However, if you can throw in a little extraordinary cordiality for my sake, it will much oblige me. The duke and I have been intimate from our schoolhood, and I should like to have him find that I have been zealous about his son. But if a word is enough to the wise, a syllable is enough to the kindness and friendship you have ever had for me, and therefore I will only add, that the duke has begged another word for Mr. Camberlayne, who travels with Lord Lincoln. I hope you will find he deserves it: I do not know him, and therefore I am always in a fright when I frank any body to you whom I cannot answer for. And, what is worse, you never complain though one send you bears or tigers.

I have quite done with your Russian expedition; it travels as slowly as if it went by the stage-coach. I expected another Bajazet in chains by this time. Instead of that, they are haggling with

the Turks about some barbarous villages in the Morea. They stop at every thing, though their mistress stops at nothing. I know this is a very brief letter; but you do not wish that I should have a battle of Naseby to send you. Adieu!

LETTER CLXI.

Arlington Street, Aug. 31, 1770.

I MUST write to you this very minute. I have just seen my Lady Orford and Cavalier Mozzi. I came to town this morning on some business, and after dinner went to Holland House, where I was sitting with Lord and Lady Holland, when the countess and her knight-errand were announced. Lady Holland was distressed and offered to go down to her: I said, by no means, it was quite a matter of indifference to me; nay, that I had rather see her than not. Up they came: we bowed and curtsied, grew perfectly free immediately, and like two persons that are well bred, easy and not much acquainted. She stayed a full hour; we pronounced each other's name without any difficulty, and when she took leave, for she sets out on Tuesday, she asked if I had any orders for Paris. I find her grown much older, bent, her cheeks fallen in, and half her teeth fallen out; but much improved in her manner and dress. The latter is that of other old women, her face not flustered and heated as it used to be, her impetuosity and eager eyes reduced within proper channels, and none of her screams and exclamations left, though a good deal of kissing remains at her entry and exit. It is not fair to judge at first sight and hearing, but the cavalier seems no genius, and still less adapted to his profession *en titre d'office*. I cannot say that I discovered any thing of the countess's asthma or ill health.

If you saw this town, you would not think there could be any news in it. It is as empty as Ferrara. Not that there is any thing more new any where else. If a dead calm portends a storm at land as well as at sea, we are at the eve of a violent hurricane. We have lived these two months upon the poor Duke of Cumberland, whom the newspapers, in so many letters, call *the Royal Idiot*. I do not know how such language will be taken abroad, but there has been a paper on the King of Spain that has half-choked the Prince of Masserano. Unluckily, it was written with uncommon humour, and described his Catholic Majesty falling down upon the floor with excessive fatigue from thrashing a horse in the tapestry, which he tried to mount. Another paper on Louis XV. was threatened, but two French officers went to the printer and assured him that they would have the honour of putting him to death if a word appeared against their master,—and the paper has not appeared. The Spanish Ambassador has menaced and complained: the Ministers, who could scarce keep their countenances, the paper was so droll, la-

mented, "Ma, che fare! Not a tapestry-horse at home escapes: how can we make you reparation, when we cannot help ourselves?" In the mean time, I must confess, we are a parcel of savages, and scalp all the world.

Our newspapers tell us of Russian victories by sea and land, but I will not believe them till they have your confirmation. I hate such rambling wars: the accounts are more like a book of travels, than journals of a campaign. One hears a town is besieged, and three months after, one learns that no army has been within two hundred leagues of it. I know almost as much of the Emperor of the moon as of the Grand Signior.

Adieu! my dear sir, tell me if you would have any bootikins. I had rather you would tell me you have no occasion for them; not that I am one of the great abhorrers of the gout; at least, as I have it rarely. I find it a total dispensation from physicians, and that is some thing.

LETTER CLXII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 20, 1770.

YESTERDAY I received your confirmation of the great, the vast, the complete victory of the Russians over the Turkish fleet. Indeed, for shortness, I had chosen to credit the first account. As all the part I take in it is the bigness of the event, it would have lost all its poignancy if I had waited to have it authenticated. It is impossible to interest oneself for that woman, who by murdering her husband, has had an opportunity of spreading so much devastation. Yet, as the French have miscarried in blowing up this conflagration, I am not sorry Catherine is triumphant. It is amusing too, to live at the crisis of a prodigious empire's fate. Consequently, you must take care that Constantinople does not escape. I do not insist on its being sacked, or that, according to a line of Sir Charles Williams, in a parody of bombast rant of Lord Granville, there

"Should visirs' heads come rolling down Constantinople's streets!"

I have no Christian fury to satiate, and wish revolutions could happen with as little bloodshed as in the Rehearsal. Nor do I interest myself for the honour of prophecies. If the Church pretends, for want of knowing what better to do with it, to wrench Daniel's *times, and time, and half a time*, to the present case, it can only be by the job being accomplished *in half the time* that any body else expected,—and, let me tell you, it is a good deal for prophecy to come a quarter so near any truth. What will the Czarina do with the Ottoman world? will she hold it *in commendam*, or send her son to reign there, that he may not remain too near her own throne? It may save poisioning him.

And pray what has carried the Pretender to Florence? Does he remain there? Has any body a mind to be doing with him? He must be adroit indeed if he escapes your vigilance.

I am laid at length upon my couch while I am writing to you, having had the gout above these three weeks in my hand, knee, and both feet, and am still lifted in and out of bed by two servants. This gives me so melancholy a prospect, that I taste very little comfort in that usual compliment, of the gout being an earnest of long life,—alas! is not long life then, an earnest of the gout? and do the joys of old age compensate the pains? What cowards we are, when content to purchase one evil with another! and when both are sure to grow worse upon our hands! Let the happiest old person recount his enjoyments, and see who would covet them; yet each of us is weak enough to expect a better lot! Oh! my dear sir, what self-deluding fools we are through every state!—but why fill you with my gloom? perhaps our best resource is the cheat we practice on ourselves. Adieu!

LETTER CLXIII.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 4, 1770.

Seeing such accounts of press-gangs in the papers, and such falling of Stocks, you will wonder that in my last I did not drop a military syllable. Alas! when I had a civil war all over my own person, you must not wonder, unpatriotic as it was, that I forgot my country. But I ought not to call ignorance forgetfulness: I did not even know with whom we were going to war; and now that I know with whom, I do not know that we *are* going to war. England that lives in the north of Europe, and Spain that dwells in the south, are vehemently angry with one another about a morsel of rock* that lies somewhere at the very bottom of America,—for modern nations are too neighbourly to quarrel about any thing that lies so near them as in the same quarter of the globe. Pray, mind; we dethrone nabobs in the most north-east corner of the Indies; the Czarina sends a fleet from the Pole to besiege Constantinople; and Spain huffs, and we arm, for one of the extremities of the southern hemisphere. It takes a twelvemonth for any of us to arrive at our object, and almost another twelvemonth before we can learn what we have been about. Your patriarchs, who lived eight or nine hundred years, could afford to wait eighteen or twenty months for the post coming in, but it is too ridiculous in our post-diluvian circumstances. By next century, I suppose, we shall fight for the Dog Star and the Great Bear. The Stocks begin to recover a little from their panic, and their pulse is a very tolerable indication.

* The Falkland Island.

Two of your brethren died last Sunday morning; so your spurs, wherein true knighthood lies, should go into double mourning. Lord Grantham* and Sir Richard Lyttleton are the persons; the latter died very suddenly, though each has long been in a deplorable way, the first with excess of scurvy, the latter with the loss of his limbs. Lord Grantham was a miserable object, but Sir Richard all jollity and generosity, and a very cheerful statue.

I am not such a philosopher with my temporary confinement. To-day I began to be led a little about the room. The pain would be endurable, were it to end here; but being the wicket through which one squeezes into old age, and the prospect pointing to more such wickets, I cannot comfort myself with that common delusion of intermediate health. What does the gout cure that is so bad as itself? With this raven-croaking mortality at my window, I am acting as if I did not believe its bodings—I am building again! Nay, but only a bed-chamber, the sort of room I seem likely to inhabit much time together. It will be large, and on the first floor, as I am not at all proud of that American state, being carried on the shoulders of my servants. Indeed, I raise mole-hills with little pleasure now. When reflection has once mixed itself with our pursuits, it renders them very insipid. Charming, thoughtless folly, can alone give any substance to our visions! The moment we perceive that they are visions, it is in vain to shut our eyes and pretend to dream.

Saturday, 6th.

Notwithstanding the testimonies you give, and which I well recollect, of the juvenile huntings of the great Prince of Tuscany,† and the slaughter he used to make of game in tapestry, it is, nevertheless, certain, that the paper published here was a mistake, and ascribed to him what related to his predecessor. It was King Ferdinand that was so watch-mad, and who kept a correspondence by constant couriers with Elliker, the famous watch-maker. It was Ferdinand, too, who, on going out of the drawing-room, always made an effort, or at least motion with his leg, that indicated a temptation to mount a horse in tapestry that hung near the door. It may, indeed, be a disorder in the family, and it may run in the blood to have an itch after tapestry animals. I am sure I wish I had a rage for riding and shooting my furniture, by a genealogic disorder, instead of the gout, which, though we can scarce discover any gouty stains in my pedigree, I must conclude derived thence, as my temperance, and sobriety would have set up an ancient philosopher. I begin to creep about my room, and can tell you, for your comfort, that by the cool, uncertain manner in which you speak of your fits, I am sure you never have had the gout. I have known several persons talk of it, that might as well have fancied they had the gout when they sneezed.

* Sir Thomas Robinson, Knight of the Bath, and first Lord Grantham of that family.

† Don Carlos, afterwards King of Naples, and then of Spain.

You shall have, however, a pair of bootikins to hang up in your armory.

I still know nothing of the war. Vast preparations every where go on, yet nobody thinks it will ripen. We used to make war without preparing; I hope the reverse will be true now. Where is the gentleman* who came lately from Rome? Has there been any thought of lending him a tapestry-horse? There is a terrible set of hangings in the House of Lords† that would frighten them—I was going to say, *out* of, but I should say, *into* their senses. It is the representation of the destruction of the Spanish Armada. It is enough to cure the whole royal family of Spain of their passion for encountering tapestry.

We have a new ship, which, I hear, terrifies all the foreign ministers; it is named the Britannia, and though carrying a hundred and twenty guns, sails as pertly as a frigate. Seamen flock in apace: the first squadron will consist of sixteen ships of the line. Your *Corps Diplomatique* says, our seamen are so impetuous, and so eager for prize-money, that it will be impossible to avoid a war: I am sure it would be impossible if they were the contrary.

Who do you think is arrived? The famous princess Daschkaw, the Czarina's favourite and accomplice, now in disgrace—and yet alive! Nay, both she and the Empress are alive! She has put her son to Westminster-school. The devil is in it, if the son of a conspiratress with an English education, does not turn out a notable politician. I am impatient to get well, or at least hope she may stay till I am, that I may see her. Cooled as my curiosity is about most things, I own I am eager to see this amazon, who had so great a share in a revolution, when she was not above nineteen. I have a print of the Czarina, with Russian verses under it, written by this virago. I do not understand them, but I conclude their value depends more on the authoress than the poetry. One is pretty sure what they do not contain—truth. Adieu!

LETTER CLXIV.

Arlington Street, Nov. 12, 1770.

I BEGIN my letter to-night, on the eve of many events, which will probably fill my paper, but at present I am only making my letter ready. The Parliament is to meet to-morrow, though the definitive courier from Spain is not expected these three days; so the King's speech must blow both hot and cold. However, the ministers need fear no parliamentary war of any consequence. The deaths of Beckford and Lord Granby, and that of Mr. Grenville,‡ which is expected every day, leave Lord Chatham without troops or generals, and unless

* The Pretender. † A tapestry in the House of Lords.

‡ George Grenville, younger brother of Richard Earl Temple, had been first Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

like Almansor,* he thinks he can conquer alone, he must lean on Lord Rockingham; and God knows! that is a slender reed. Wilkes and his party are grown ridiculous; so that upon the whole, Opposition is little formidable. I believe and hope the complexion of the answer from Spain will be pacific. We have by this time, or shall by to-morrow, have a Lord Chancellor. It is De Grey, the Attorney-General; a very proper one, as often as the gout will let him be so. I am not afflicted with it like him, and mine, thanks to water and the bootikins, is entirely gone; yet I would not take the Great Seal. Mr. Conway has succeeded Lord Granby as Colonel of the Blues, the most agreeable post in the army. Lady Aylesbury's father,† the Duke of Argyle, is just dead; so the charming Duchess of Hamilton is now Duchess of Argyle. As she is not quite so charming as she was, I don't know whether it is not better than to retain a title that put one in mind of her beauty. Lord Egmont‡ is given over too, so the next volume of our history will have few of the old actors in it. Thus much for preface. To-morrow, on Friday, I may tell you more.

To-morrow, 13th.

Mr. Grenville died at seven this morning; consequently Lord Chatham and Lord Temple cannot be at the House of Lords. The King's speech is very firm, and war must ensue if Spain is not very yielding. As we shall probably know in two or three days, I shall keep back my letter till Friday.

Thursday, 15th.

No courier, no Chancellor yet. De Grey was only to be Lord Keeper, and now hesitates—for men in these times are the reverse of commodities at an auction: when there is but one man to be sold, and but one bidder for him, that bidder is forced to enhance upon himself. Half the revenue goes in salaries, and the other half will go in pensions to persuade people to accept those salaries. However, Lord Mansfield, who had already been frightened out of the Speaker's chair, will not be encouraged by a Junius that came out yesterday, the most outrageous, I suppose, ever published against so high a magistrate by name. The excess of abuse, the personality, and new attacks on the Scotch, make people ascribe it to Wilkes—to me the composition is far above him.

The Parliament opened with nothing more than conversation in both Houses: Lord Chatham, Lord Temple, and all the friends of Mr. Grenville, absenting themselves, as he was dead that morning. The complexion, however, seemed to be military. Lord North spoke well, and with great prudence; Colonel Barré, with wit and severity; Burke warmly, and not well. I write this to-day because I am obliged to go to Strawberry to-morrow on some business of my own; but if I learn any thing particular to-night, I will add it before I set out in the morning.

* In Dryden's Conquest of Granada.

† General John Campbell succeeded his cousin Archibald, Duke of Argyll, in the title.

‡ John Perceval, second Earl of Egmont.

Friday morning.

No, nothing new, but that Baron Smyth, one of the Commissioners of the Great Seal, is to be Lord Keeper I know nothing of him, but that he is a methodist, and a grandson of Waller's Sacharissa, by a second husband.

Well! I have seen the Princess Daschkaw, and she is well worth seeing—not for her person, though, for an absolute Tarter, she is not ugly: her smile is pleasing, but her eyes have a very Catiline fierceness. Her behaviour is extraordinarily frank and easy. She talks on all subjects, and not ill, nor with striking pedantry, and as quick and very animated. She puts herself above all attention to dress, and every thing feminine, and yet sings tenderly and agreeably, with a pretty voice. She, and a Russian lady who accompanies her, sung two songs of the people, who are all musical; one was grave, the other lively, but with very tender turns, and both resembling extremely the Venetian barquerolles. She speaks English a little, understands it easily: French is very familiar to her, and she knows Latin. When the news of the naval victory over the Turks arrived at Petersburg, the Czarina made the archbishop mount the tomb of Peter the Great, and ascribe the victory to him as the founder of the Marine. It was a bold *coup de théatre*, and Pagan enough. The discourse, which is to be very elegant, the princess has translated into French, and Dr. Hinchcliffe, Bishop of Peterborough, is to publish it in English. But, as an instance of her quickness and parts, I must tell you that she went to a Quaker's meeting. As she came away, one of the women came up to her, and told her she saw she was a foreigner, that she wished her all prosperity, and should be very glad if any thing she had seen amongst them that day should contribute to her salvation. The Princess thanked her very civilly, and said, "Madame, je ne sçais si la voye de silence n'est point la meilleure façon d'adorer l'Etre Supreme." In short, she is a very singular personage, and I am extremely pleased that I have seen her. Adieu!

LETTER CLXV.

Arlington Street, Nov. 26, 1770.

I THIS minute receive your letter of October 27th, and do not wonder you are impatient to hear what the Spanish courier says. He arrived this day sevennight; and, had his message been definite, or published, you should have heard immediately; but, whatever he brought, it was left to the Spanish Ambassador to traffic with, and make the best market he could of it. At first, the Stocks, who are our most knowing politicians, opined that the answer was pacific, and they held their heads very high. On Saturday last, their hearts sunk into their breeches; all officers were ordered to their posts. I am just come from the King's levee, where Lord Howe kissed

hands for being appointed Commander in the Mediterranean. He is no trifler. The army is to be augmented. Still I will hope we shall remain in peace, for, whether we beat or are beaten, we always contrive to make a shameful treaty. At home, the Ministers are victorious. Motions were made in both Houses last Thursday for the papers relating to Falkland's Island, which were refused in the Lords by 61 to 25; in the Commons, by 225 to 101. Lord Chatham, who is Almanzor himself, and kicks and cuffs friend and enemy, abused the Ministers, Opposition, Wilkes, and the City. Lord Temple did not appear, nor any of Grenville's friends. Wilkes has his own civil wars in his own party, and by the consequence of fractions in small numbers, both he and his rival-mates are become ridiculous. This is the present state at home. We have neither Chancellor nor Keeper yet: Bathurst is now talked of.

I am much obliged to you for the detail of Le Fevre's medicine; but I am perfectly recovered without it, and strong in opinion against it. I am persuaded that he is a quack, and his nostrum dangerous. By quack I mean impostor, not in opposition to, but in common with physicians. He has been here and carried off five thousand pounds, at a hundred pounds per patient.* You must know, I do not believe the gout to be curable. In the next place, I am sure he cannot give any proof of its being a humour, and if it is, it is not a single fund of humours, but probably a mass thrown off at periods by the constitution. It is doubtful whether wind is not the essence of gout; it certainly has much to do with it. There must have been longer experience of this new remedy's effects before I would try it upon myself. I have known many nostrums stop every cranny into which the gout is used to crowd itself, and the consequence has always been an explosion. I am not desperate, nor like the adage, *kill or cure*. But my great objection of all is, that the medicine begins with *giving* the gout. Thank it; I have not the disorder above once in two years, and it would be bad economy to bring on what I may never live to have. In short, the bootikins, water, and lemonade, have restored me so completely, that I have not the smallest symptom left of lameness or weakness; and Mr. Chute, who has a much deeper mine of gout in his frame than I have, finds his fits exceedingly diminished by the constant use of the bootikins, and walks better than he did ten years ago.

Tuesday.

I must send away my letter without being able to tell you whether it is war or peace. You shall hear again as soon as either is determined. Adieu!

* His medicine proved extremely noxious.

LETTER CLXVI.

Arlington Street, Dec. 18th, 1770.

The peace is an errant Will-o'-wisp, a Jack-o'-lanthorn, that dances before one's eyes, and one cannot set one's foot upon it. A new vapour has started up before it, which, as I am no natural philosopher, I cannot tell whether it will bring us nearer to the meteor, or prevent our reaching it. The day before yesterday Lord Weymouth resigned the Seals. If you ask why? so does every body; and I do not hear that any body has received an answer. Lord Sandwich succeeds him, but takes the Northern Province, not yours, as you would wish. However, Lord Rochford does, and I flatter myself you are very well with him too.

Recent as this event is, it is almost forgotten in a duel that happened yesterday between Lord George Germaine and a Governor Johnstone, the latter of whom abused the former grossly last Friday in the House of Commons. Lord George behaved with the utmost coolness and intrepidity. Each fired two pistols, and Lord George's first was shattered in his hand by Johnstone's fire, but neither were hurt. However, whatever Lord George Sackville* was, Lord George Germaine is a hero!

If we have nothing else to do after the holidays we are to amuse ourselves with worrying Lord Mansfield, who, between irregularities in his Court, timidity, and want of judgment, has lowered himself to be the object of hatred to many, and of contempt to every body. I do not think that he could re-establish himself, if he were to fight Governor Johnstone.

Last week there was a great uproar in the House of Lords, followed by a succession of Lord Chatham and a dozen of the Opposition. They returned next day very quietly. Part of the House of Commons, whose members the majority had turned out, attempted to convert this riot into a quarrel between the Houses, but could make nothing of it. M. de Guines, the new French Ambassador, stares and wonders what all these things mean: some fresh hurly-burly arrives before he has got half way into a comprehension of the preceding. He is extremely civil and attentive to please—I do not know whether he will have time to succeed.

This is but a mezzanine letter; something, if you will allow me to pun, between *stories*. I don't know what is to be built up or pulled down, for I am no architect, but only sketch out what I see. Our fabrics, indeed, of late years, seem to be erected with cards, easily raised and as easily demolished. As we have used all our packs

* Lord George Sackville took the name of Germaine on inheriting the estate of Lady Elizabeth Germaine. The seconds were, for Lord George Germaine, Right Hon. Thomas Townshend; for Governor Johnstone, Sir James Lowther, Bart.—Ed.

round and round, we can but have some of the old ones again. Adieu!

LETTER CLXVII.

Strawberry Hill, Saturday evening, Dec. 29th, 1770.

We are alarmed, or very glad, we don't know which. The Duke de Choiseul is fallen! but we cannot tell yet whether the mood of his successors will be peaceable or martial. The news arrived yesterday morning, and the event happened but last Monday evening. He was allowed but three hours to prepare for his journey, and ordered to retire to his seat at Chanteloup; but there are letters that say *qu'il ira plus loin*. The Duke de Praslin is banished too—a disagreeable man; but his fate is a little hard; for he was just going to resign the Marine to Chatelet, who, by the way, is forbidden to visit Choiseul. I shall shed no tears for Chatelet, the most peevish and insolent of men, our bitter enemy, and whom M. de Choiseul may thank in some measure for his fall; for I believe while Chatelet was here, he drew the Spaniards into the attack of Falkland's Island. Choiseul's own conduct seems to have been not a little equivocal. His friends maintained that his existence as a minister depended on his preventing a war, and he certainly confuted the Controller-General's plan for raising supplies for it. Yet, it is now said, that on the very morning of the Duke's disgrace, the King reproached him, and said, "Monsieur je vous avois dit, que je ne voulois pas la guerre;" and the Duke d'Aiguillon's friends have officiously whispered, that if Choiseul was out it would certainly be peace; but did not Lord Chatham, immediately before he was Minister, protest not half a man should be sent to Germany, and yet, were not all our men and all our money sent thither? The Chevalier de Muy is made Secretary-at-War, and it is supposed Monsieur d'Aiguillon is, or will be, the Minister.

Thus Abishag* has strangled an Administration that has lasted fourteen years. I am sincerely grieved for the Duchess de Choiseul, the most perfect being I know of either sex. I cannot possibly feel for her husband: Corsica is engraved in my memory, as I believe it is on your heart. His cruelties there, I should think, would not cheer his solitude or prison. In the mean time, desolation and confusion reign all over France. They are almost bankrupts, and quite famished. The Parliament of Paris has quitted its functions, and the other tribunals threaten to follow the example. Some people say, that Maupeau, the Chancellor, told the King, that they were supported underhand by Choiseul, and must submit if he were removed. The suggestion is specious at least, as the object of their antipathy

* Madame du Barri.

is the Duke d'Aiguillon. If the latter should think a war a good diversion to their enterprises, I should not be surprised if they went on, especially if a bankruptcy follows famine. The new Minister and the Chancellor are in general execration. On the latter's lately obtaining the *Cordon Bleu*, this epigram appeared:—

> Ce tyran de la France, qui cherche à mettre tout en feu,
> Mérite un cordon, mais ce n'est pas le cordon bleu.

We shall see how Spain likes the fall of the author of the "Family-compact." There is an Empress will not be pleased with it, but it is not the Russian Empress; and much less the Turks, who are as little obliged to that bold man's intrigues as the poor Corsicans. How can one regret such a general *Boutefeu?*

Perhaps our situation is not very stable neither. The world who are ignorant of Lord Weymouth's motives, suspect a secret intelligence with Lord Chatham. Oh! let us have peace abroad before we quarrel any more at home!

Judge Bathurst is to be Lord Keeper, with many other arrangements in the law; but as you neither know the persons, nor I care about them, I shall not fill my paper with the catalogue, but reserve the rest of my letter for Tuesday, when I shall be in town. No Englishman, you know, will sacrifice his Saturday and Sunday. I have so little to do with all these matters, that I came hither this morning, and left this new chaos to arrange itself as it pleases. It certainly is an era, and may be an extensive one: not very honourable to old King Capet,* whatever it may be to the intrigues of his new Ministers. The Jesuits will not be without hopes. They have a friend that made mischief *ante Helenam*.

Jan. 1, 1771.

I hope the new year will end as quietly as it begins, for I have not a syllable to tell you. No letters are come from France since Friday morning, and this is Tuesday noon. As we had full time to reason—in the dark, the general persuasion is, that the French Revolution will produce peace—I mean in Europe—not amongst themselves. Probably I have been sending you little but what you will have heard long before you receive my letter; but no matter; if we did not chat about our neighbour Kings, I don't know how we should keep up our correspondence, for we are better acquainted with King Louis, King Carlos, and Empresses Katharine and Teresa, than you with the English that I live amongst, or I with your Florentines. Adieu!

* Louis XV.

LETTER CLXVIII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 15th, 1771.

THERE seems to be a pestilence amongst our politicians. They go off by wholesale. The Duke of Bedford died last night; happily for himself, poor man! for he had lost his sight, and almost his speech and limbs. Sir Edward Hawke is only dead politically, having resigned from age and infirmities. The new Secretary of State, Lord Sandwich, succeeds him, and no man in England is fitter for the office. I do not know who will have the Seals. Lord Suffolk is most talked of, but though young, he is all over gout. The Great Seal remains at nurse, and the changes in the law are still in suspense, like the peace, which somehow or other has been strangely bungled. We might, I am persuaded, have had it two months ago. The Opposition is in the last state of a consumption; Mr. Grenville's friends point due west to St. James's; Lord Chatham and Lord Temple have quarrelled, and the latter is retired. Lord Shelburne has lost his wife, our friend Lady Granville's daughter,* acts the disconsolate husband, and is going abroad; Wilkes and Parson Horne write against each other; Alderman Sawbridge is dying; and, in short, Lord Chatham, like Widdrington in Chevy Chace, is left almost alone to fight it out upon his stumps. So we must have a new world, start new subjects, or sink into a dead calm; for I think still that we shall not go to war.

In France the scene seems thoroughly foolish. The Duke of Choiseul has lost his power ridiculously by braving a *fille de joie*, to humour two women† who seem to think "qu'on ne doit pas être impunement Putain, sans être grande dame." He comforts himself, as every body deos in France that is in fashion, with being applauded, and with reading a million of epigrams against his enemies: not considering that he will be as much forgotten in a month as if he was the pattern of last year's coat. The cabal that drove him out are said to be divided; at least they had no arrangement ready. They have been dragging old Lieutenant-Generals out of garrisons to fill up state places, and cannot get enough even thence, or from hospitals; but are trying to furbish up ancient Ministers and Ambassadors to set forwards for ostensible Minister. They have talked of Monsieur d'Ossun from Madrid, a Monsieur de Vergennes who was at Constantinople, and even of the silly Cardinal de Bernis. The Chancellor, who is abhorred, seems to have most credit. The Duc d'Aiguillon, they say, is a little disappointed, but will have the *affiaires étran-*

* The first wife of William Fitzmaurice, second Earl of Shelburne was daughter of John Carteret, Earl of Granville, by his second wife, Lady Sophia Fermor, daughter of Thomas Earl of Pomfret.

† The Duchesse de Grammont, sister of the Duc de Choiseul, and her friend the Princesse de Beauveau.

gères as soon as the peace is made; but at present the Prince of Condé has much power with the King. In the mean time the thunders of Versailles have blunted themselves, and a composition is on foot with the Parliament, who are permitted not to register the last tempest. I do not think these new giants will grow more tractable when Pelion and Ossa are lifted off their necks.

So much for England and France. Yes, yes, it is a new world. The ancient *dramatis personæ* are dead, or have quitted the stage. I shall continue for your sake to send you great outlines, but I cannot interest myself about a new race, when I have done with the theatre myself. What can occupy one less than a play-bill, when one scarce knows half the actors by sight? Not that I have that symptom of age, esteeming only the veterans one remembers. God knows, how few I admired of the old troop! neither Betterton nor Penkethman, Lord Hardwicke nor the Duke of Newcastle. I can easily expect their successors to play their parts better.

Princess Amelia, who is not of this age neither, was very near dying two days ago of a bilious fever.

Well, as we have closed a long period, pray send me my letters to the end of last year. I believe I have mentioned it once or twice. I should like to have them all together, for they are a kind of history—only think of eight and twenty years!

I will tell you what I must get you to send me, too, by the first opportunity, the "Lettere Pittoriche;" I am not quite sure of the title, but they are three, four, or five small volumes, in quarto, of the letters of the great painters. I saw the first two volumes some time ago at Paris, but could not get them; and as I have now finished the last volume of my "Anecdotes of Painting," and intend, after it is published, to make a new general edition, I know there are passages in those letters that I should like to insert in my work. Adieu!

LETTER CLXIX.

Arlington Street, Jan. 20, 1771.

You will wonder to hear from me again so very soon. Yet I am not going to proclaim war, or announce peace; though I believe we shall, thank God, have the latter. We have not a new Secretary of State, nor any new death; but, in short, I am impatient to thank you for a present that I have received, and that you never mentioned having sent me. Sure it is not so insignificant! It is the volume of "Masaccio's Designs," brought by Mr. Coxe. I am transported with them! They are Nature itself, and evidently the precursors of Raphael. He plainly availed himself of their dignity, but scarce reached the infinite truth of their expression. The action of the mouth in every head almost surpasses any other master, and seems to have been caught only by this. I did not remember these works.

Oh! if there are more, make your Patch* give us all. I cannot be content under all. They are admirably touched and executed: he must engrave the rest; and there is one more work he must perform, too. I remember at Florence a very few pictures of Fra. Bartolomeo, another parent of Raphael, and whose ideas I thought, if possible, greater: as there is such a scarcity of his works, and as they have never that I know been engraved, at least not so well I am persuaded as these by Patch, make him add them to another set of Masaccio's heads. It will immortalize you both to preserve such works. I am much pleased, too, with the "Caricaturas," that is, with those that are scarce caricaturas; for, you must know, I love truth; and those that are not extravagant, are highly natural. Tell me more of this Patch; and, if you have a mind to please me quite, send me a drawing by him of yourself, of your whole person, exactly as you are. Astley's head of you, though finely coloured, never satisfied me for likeness. Let me have your figure precisely, and as natural as the *Crelia in Funzione*. I am expecting Sir Joshua Reynolds, our best painter, whom I have sent for, to see some wonderful miniatures I have bought, and these heads of Masaccio. I think they may give him such lights as may raise him prodigiously. I must repeat it, the mouths, and often the eyes, are life itself. There is but one head I do not like; it is No. 22; and yet I believe it a portrait, but ill chosen. My dear sir, do push on this work: let us have more of Masaccio, and all the few of Bartolomeo. The great Duke will not refuse you a permission for Patch to copy them.

22d.

Obligations beget importunities. I must beg you to send me two more of Patch's volumes of Masaccio; but, as they are for other people, I must pay for them; so don't haggle but tell me their price, and I will give your brother the money.

The Parliament is in the act of meeting; but, I should think, except a Mansfield-baiting, there will be little stirring till the peace is made, and can be found fault with. Made, I hope, and think, it will be. For the vacancies, they are still at market. It is odd that just at the same moment, in France the Chancellor cannot make a Minister, and in England the Minister cannot make a Chancellor.

As this is a letter of supererogation, I make no excuses for its brevity. Adieu.

Tuesday, 22d, in the evening.

I had sealed my letter, as you will perceive; and break it open again in a great hurry, to tell you the peace was signed last night, and declared in the House of Commons to-day. You will ask the conditions: I don't know them yet, nor much trouble my head about them, but I could not help sending you this good news.

* An English artist and picture-dealer and cleaner, afterwards much known and employed.

My codicil must contradict half my letter. Lord Halifax is Secretary of State, and Lord Suffolk Privy Seal. Mr. Bathurst, Lord Keeper, *en attendant* his father's death to be Chancellor; De Grey, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; Thurlow and Wedderburne Attorney and Solicitor-Generals. There, I think I shall have no occasion to write again soon. Good night!

LETTER CLXX.

Arlington Street, February 22, 1771.

Two days ago there began to be an alarm at the delay of the Spanish courier, and people were persuaded that the King of Spain had refused to ratify his ambassador's declaration; who, on the warrant of the French King, had ventured to sign it, though expecting every hour to be recalled, as he actually was two days afterwards. However, the night before last, to the great comfort of Prince Masserano and our Ministers, the ratification arrived; and, after so many delays and untoward accidents, Fortune has interposed, (for there has been great luck, too, in the affair,) and peace is again established. With you, I am not at all clear that Choiseul was in earnest to make it. If he was, it was entirely owing to his own ticklish situation. Other people think, that this very situation had made him desperate; and that he was on the point of striking a hardy stroke indeed; and meditated sending a strong army into Holland, to oblige the Dutch to lend twelve men-of-war to invade us. Count Welderen,* who is totally an anti-gaul, assured me he did not believe this project. Still I am very glad such a *boute-feu* is removed.

This treaty is an epoch; and puts a total end to all our preceding histories. Long quiet is never probable, nor shall I guess who will disturb it; but, whatever happens, must be thoroughly new matter, though some of the actors perhaps may not be so. Both Lord Chatham and Wilkes are at the end of their reckoning, and the Opposition can do nothing without fresh fuel.

The scene that is closed here seems to be but opening in France. The Parliament of Paris banished; a new one arbitrarily appointed; the Princes of the Blood refractory and disobedient; the other Parliament as mutinous; and distress every where: if the army catches the infection, what may not happen, when the King is despised, his agents detested, and no Ministry settled? Some say the mistress and her faction keep him hourly diverted or drunk; others, that he has got a new passion: how creditable at sixty! Still I think it is the crisis of their constitution. If the Monarch prevails, he becomes absolute as a Czar; if he is forced to bend, will the Parliament stop there?

* The Dutch Minister in England. He married a sister of Sir John Griffin, Maid of Honour to Anne Princess of Orange.

In the mean time our most serious war is between two operas. Mr. Hobart, Lord Buckingham's brother, is manager of the Haymarket. Last year he affronted Guadagni, by preferring the Zamperina,* his own mistress, to the singing hero's sister. The Duchess of Northumberland, Lady Harrington, and some other great ladies, espoused the brother, and without a license erected an opera for him at Madame Cornelys's. This is a singular dame, and you must be acquainted with her. She sung here formerly, by the name of the Pompeiati. Of late years she has been the Heidegger of the age, and presided over our diversions. Her taste and invention in pleasures and decorations are singular. She took Carlisle House in Soho-square, enlarged it, and established assemblies and balls by subscription. At first they scandalized, but soon drew in both righteous and ungodly. She went on building, and made her house a fairy palace, for balls, concerts, and masquerades. Her opera, which she called *Harmonic Meetings*, was splendid and charming. Mr. Hobart began to starve, and the managers of the theatres were alarmed. To avoid the act, she pretended to take no money, and had the assurance to advertise that the subscription was to provide coals for the poor, for she has vehemently courted the mob, and succeeded in gaining their princely favour. She then declared her masquerades were for the benefit of commerce. I concluded she would open another sort of house next for the interests of the Foundling Hospital, and I was not quite mistaken, for they say one of her maids gained by Mr. Hobart, affirms that she could not undergo the fatigue of managing such a house. At last Mr. Hobart informed against her, and the bench of justices, less soothable by music than Orpheus's beasts, have pronounced against her. Her opera is quashed, and Guadagni, who governed so haughtily at Vienna, that, to pique some man of quality there, he named a minister to Venice, is not only fined, but was threatened to be sent to Bridewell, which chilled the blood of all the Cæsars and Alexanders he had ever represented; nor could any promises of his lady-patronesses rehabilitate his courage—so for once an act of Parliament goes for something.

You have got three new companions;† General Montagu, a West-Indian Mr. Paine, and Mr. Lynch, your brother at Turin.

There is the devil to pay in Denmark. The Queen has got the ascendant, has turned out favourites and Ministers, and literally wears the breeches, actual buckskin. There is a physician,‡ who is said to rule both their Majesties, and I suppose is sold to France, for that is the predominant interest now at Copenhagen. The Czarina has whispered her disapprobation, and if she has a talon left, when she has done with the Ottomans, may chance to scratch the little King.

For eight months to come I should think we shall have little to talk of, you and I, but distant wars and distant majesties. For my

* See Correspondence of George Selwyn, vol. ii. *passim*.
† As Knights of the Bath.
‡ Struensee, afterwards beheaded.

part, I reckon the volume quite shut in which I took any interest. The succeeding world is young, new, and half unknown to me. Tranquillity comprehends every wish I have left, and I think I should not even ask what news there is, but for fear of seeming wedded to old stories—the rock of old men; and yet I should prefer that failing to the solicitude about a world one belongs to no more! Adieu!

LETTER CLXXI.

Arlington Street, March 22, 1771.

I was in too great a hurry when I announced peaceable times, and half took leave of you as a correspondent. The horizon is overcast again already; the wind is got to the north-east and by Wilkes; and without a figure, the House of Commons and the city of London are at open war. It is more surprising that Wilkes is not the aggressor—at least Folly put new crackers into his hand. Two cousins, both George Onslow by name, the son and nephew of the old Speaker, took offence at seeing the debates and speeches of the House printed, and the more, as they had both been much abused. They complain, and the House issues warrants for seizing the printers, and addresses the King to issue a proclamation for apprehending them. Out comes a proclamation, and no great seal to it. The City declares no man shall be apprehended contrary to law, within their jurisdiction. The printers are seized; Wilkes, as sitting alderman, releases one: the Lord Mayor, Wilkes, and another alderman deliver another, and commit the messenger of the House of Commons to prison. The House summons the Lord Mayor to appear before them and answer for his conduct, but as he is laid up with the gout, allow him to come on Monday last, or to-day, Friday. He gets out of bed and goes on Monday. Thousands of hand-bills are dispersed to invite the mob to escort him, but not a hundred attend. He pleads his oath of office, is too ill to stay, demands that the City should be heard by council, and is allowed to retire. Wilkes is summoned too: writes a refusal to the Speaker, unless he is admitted to his seat. The Speaker will not receive his letter, nor the House hear it, though read, and again order him to attend. On Wednesday they allow counsel, but not against their own privileges, and expect the Lord Mayor again to-day, but the papers of this morning say he is not yet able to appear.

This is the *argomento*, as your opera-books call the sketch of the subject, but I do not tell you the *dénouement* any more than Metastasio does—I wish it may not be necessary to call it the catastrophe, for methinks here are plenty of combustibles: but as this is only the first act, and I have not time to finish my letter to-day, I may be able to unfold a little more of the drama by Tuesday's post: but I

have long left off guessing, for in all public events I have observed, that the turn things take depends upon persons and accidents that start up in the midst of the story, and have nothing to do with the reasoning on which one builds conjectures; so for the present I leave this chapter in the dark, which is conformable to the suspense that artful tragic writers use to increase the interest and curiosity of their readers. I believe you will think I have been employing the same mechanism before, having announced to you three months ago the progress of the prosecution of Lord Mansfield; but it seems that Lord Camden, Lord Chatham, and the public, who seldom relinquish a promised bear-baiting, have equally forgotten the pomp with which that spectacle was announced. I have not heard it mentioned since Christmas—and now we are not likely to want trials and sufferers!—nay, martyrs!

I doubt—yes, I doubt, whether King Carlos does not intend to find us still more serious employment, if this should not prove so. There has been an ugly question asked, I don't know by whom, or to whom, "But, pray when does England intend to restore Falkland's Island?" "Restore it! Why, Lord bless us! you have not given it back to England yet: how can she restore it to you?" The Stocks have got wind of this secret, and their heart is fallen into their breeches, where the heart of the Stocks is apt to lie. Then there is a famine and pestilence arrived from Bengal. Some say three millions of people are swept away, and others three thousand; and a ship lost with Vansittart, Scrafton, and the supervisors who were going to set all to rights; for it seems we are playing the devil, and plundering and tyrannising—as if we had not gone thither for those two Christain purposes.

Saturday, 23rd.

My Lord Mayor is still confined, and sent a card yesterday to the Speaker to excuse waiting on him. The House in the mean time intend to divert themselves with Alderman Oliver on Monday, for their dignity grows very much inflamed for its own honour. So does the City's too, and Temple-bar will have enough to do to keep the peace between them.

France, luckily, has little leisure to join with King Carlos or King Brass Crosby—their confusions and King Louis's weakness seem to increase every day. You shall hear the history of the Comte de Maillebois. He accused Marshal D'Etrées in the last war for losing the battle of Hastenbecke, which, by the way, we never found. D'Etrées recriminated, and called Maillebois before the Marshals of France by whom he was *flétri*, imprisoned for a year, and deprived of all his employments but one *lieutenance héréditaire*.

Of late Maillebois had revived, and caballed against Choiseul, on whose fall he grew big; and, by the interest of the Prince of Condé and M. de Montegnard, was appointed one of a new commission of three *Directeurs des Places Fortifiées*, with fotry thousand livres a-year each. The Comte de Broglie, who adheres to the D'Aiguillon's

faction, spirits up his brother, and the Marshals of France present a strong memorial against so improper a nomination. Montegnard prevails, and obtains from the King a reprimand to the Marshals, and calls it *témeraire* to dispute his royal choice. This was signed at ten in the morning. Triumphant Maillebois posts with it to Paris. At past twelve that very night he receives a dismission, and Montegnard a command to wait on each separate Marshal of France the next morning, and beg their pardons for having made so unworthy a recommendation. There! there are two men tolerably disgraced! And what do you think of such weathercock Majesty that signs two such contradictions in one day? As the latter was Madame du Barri's act, it is plain what is the shape of the helm of Government. Monsieur de Montegnard and the Abbé du Terray, are said to have resigned, and to be again in place, but I am not sure of the truth of this last paragraph.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday night.

I came hither to-day in a tempest of snow; it is the fourth winter we have had since Christmas. I was not quite so much at ease when I went to town last Monday, having received a courier from Mr. Conway to tell me that my house in Arlington Street had been broken open in the night, and all my cabinets and trunks forced and plundered. I was a good quarter of an hour before I recollected that it was very becoming to have philosophy enough not to care about what one does care, for if you don't care there is no philosophy in bearing it. I despatched my upper servant, breakfasted with Mr. Chute, who was come down with me, fed the bantams as usual, and made no more hurry to town than Cincinnatus would have done, if he had lost a basket of turnips. I had left in my drawers 270*l.* in bank-bills, and three hundred guineas; not to mention all my gold and silver coins, some inestimable miniatures, a little plate, and a good deal of furniture, under no guard but that of two maidens, whom lions you know will not touch, but who are very ravishable by house-breakers, a much more hungry kind of wild beast. When I arrived, my surprise was by no means diminished. I found in three different chambers, three cabinets, a large chest, and a glass case of china wide open, the locks not picked, but forced, and the doors of them broken to pieces. You will wonder that this should surprise me when I had been prepared for it. Oh! the miracle was, that I did not find, nor to this hour have found, the least thing missing. In the cabinet of modern medals there were, and so there are still, a series of English coins, with downright John-Trot guineas, half-guineas, shillings, sixpenses, and every kind of current money. Not a single piece was removed. Just so in the Roman and Greek cabinet; though in the latter were some drawers of papers, which they had tumbled and scattered about the floor. A great Exchequer chest, that belonged to my father, was in the same room. Not being able to force the lock, the philosophers (for thieves that steal nothing deserve the title much more than Cincinnatus or I) had wrenched a great flapper of brass with such violence as to break it

into seven pieces. The trunk contained a new set of chairs of French tapestry, two screens, rolls of prints, and a suit of silver stuff that I had made for the King's wedding. All was turned topsy turvy, and nothing stolen. The glass-case and cabinet of shells had been handled as roughly by these impotent gallants. Another little table with drawers, in which by the way the key was left, had been opened too, and a metal standish, that they ought to have taken for silver, and a silver hand-candlestick that stood upon it, were untouched. Some plate in the pantry, and all my linen just come from the wash, had no more charms for them than gold or silver. In short, I could not help laughing, especially as the only two moveables neglected, were another little table with drawes and the money, and a writing-box with the bank-notes, both in the same chamber where they made the first havoc. In short, they had broken out a panel in the door of the area, and unbarred and unbolted it and gone out at the street door, which they left wide open at five o'clock in the morning. A passenger had found it so, and alarmed the maids, one of whom ran naked into the street, and by her cries waked my Lord Romney, who lives opposite. The poor creature was in fits for two days, but at first, finding my coach-maker's apprentice in the street, had sent him to Mr. Conway, who immediately despatched him to me before he knew how little damage I had received, the whole of which consists in repairing the doors and locks of my cabinets and coffer.

All London is reasoning on this marvellous adventure, and not an argument presents itself that some other does not contradict. I insist that I have a talisman. You must know that last winter, being asked by Lord Vere to assist in settling Lady Bettys Germaine's auction, I found in an old catalogue of her collection this article, "*The Black Stone into which Dr. Dee used to call his spirits.*" Dr. Dee, you must know, was a great conjurer in the days of Queen Elizabeth, and has written a folio of the dialogues he held with his imps. I asked eagerly for this stone; Lord Vere said he knew of no such thing, but if found, it should certainly be at my service. Alas! the stone was gone! This winter I was again employed by Lord Frederic Campbell, for I am an absolute auctioneer, to do him the same service about his father's* collection. Among other odd things, he produced a round piece of shining black marble in a leathern case, as big as the crown of my hat, and asked me what that could possibly be? I screamed out, "Oh Lord, I am the only man in England that can tell you! it is Dr. Dee's black stone!" it certainly is: Lady Betty had formerly given away or sold, time out of mind, for she was a thousand years old, that part of the Peterborough collection which contained Natural Philosophy. So, or since, the black stone had wandered into an auction, for the lotted paper is still on it. The Duke of Argyle, who bought every thing, bought it: Lord Frederick gave it to me;† and if it was not this magical stone, which

* John, Duke of Argyll.

† At the dispersion of the treasures at Strawberry Hill, in 1842, this celebrated speculum of Kennel coal was purchased by Mr. Strong of Bristol.—Ed.

is only high polished coal, that preserved my chattels, in truth I cannot guess what did.

We have got the Roman Prince and Princess Giustiniani: she is daughter of some Derwentwater, and has many relations here among the spurious royal family. He, you know, inhabits that sumptuous of all palaces at Rome with door-cases *giallo antico*. He is not quite so magnificently lodged here, his portal being garnished with beef-steaks. He would allow but seven sequins a-month for his lodging, and nobody would house him at that rate but a butcher in Piccadilly. The Duke of Gloucester went to thank him for his civilities to the Duke of York—and was let in! Think of two such demigods visiting at a shamble. I will reserve the rest of my paper for the event of to-morrow. If the war with the City goes on, Prince Giustiniani may happen to be as much surprised as we are at his lodging in a butcher's shop.

Stay, I must say a few words more. What felicity that Patch had saved Masaccio's designs before the fire, and what pity St. Andrea's* body was not burnt instead of them! The body might have been supplied by the first malefactor's that was hanged, and might have passed for a miracle. I shall be very thankful to you for any two views of Florence, not as *sopra-portas*, for my houses are not furnished at all in the French style, but as pictures, and smaller than that size; and I give you other thanks for what you have sent me. I will try to serve Patch in his subscription, but the best way will be to have his brother advertise. However, I will send for the brother and talk to him.

Tuesday, March 26.

The die is cast. The army of the House of Commons has marched into the City, and made a prisoner; but as yet no blood is spilt; though I own I expected to hear there was this morning when I waked. Last night when I went to bed at half-an-hour after twelve, I had just been told that all the avenues to the House were blockaded, and had beaten back the peace-officers, who had been summoned, for it was *toute autre chose* yesterday, when the Lord Mayor went to the House, from what it had been the first day. He was now escorted by a prodigious multitude, who hissed and insulted the members of both Houses, particularly Lord March and Sullivan, who escaped with difficulty, and the latter of whom they had mistaken for the elder Onslow. However, many retired with the Lord Mayor, who went away ill at ten at night, and the rest were dispersed by the extreme severity of the weather, and by the lateness of the debate, which lasted till past four in the morning, when they sent Alderman Oliver to the Tower, who would make no submission, though the Ministers wished to be quit of him on easy terms. The Lord Mayor is to be judged to-morrow.

Many unpleasant passages there were for the Court. Sir George

* Masaccio's paintings were in the church of St. Andrea at Florence.

Saville left the House, protesting against their proceedings, and was followed by some of his friends. Colonel Barré went farther, said in his place that the conduct of the House was *infamous*, that no honest man could sit amongst them, and walked away—and the House was forced to swallow so ungrateful a bolus. Nor was this all. Alderman Townsend charged all their arbitrary proceedings *on the baneful influence of the Princess Dowager of Wales*—yes, in those very words.

Well! what think you now? When so many men have ambition to be martyrs, will the storms easily subside? Oh! Sir Robert, my father, would this have happened in your days? I can remember, when on the Convention, Sir William Windham, no fool for that time, laboured to be sent to the Tower, and my father told him in plain terms he knew his meaning, and would not indulge him. This generation is wiser, for I am sure Alderman Oliver is not, and yet he has carried his point. But I grow old, and gossip. One always prefers the wisdom of one's own age. My father's maxim, *Quieta non mouvere*, was very well in those ignorant days. The science of government is better understood now—so, to be sure, *whatever is, is right*. Adieu!

LETTER CLXXII.

Arlington Street, March 30, 1771.

This is not a letter, but a codicil to the last. I think we are going into great violences. A prodigious mob came from the City with the Lord Mayor on Wednesday, and a greater was at his service, but he would not encourage it. The two Foxes were assaulted and dragged out of their chariot, and escaped with difficulty. Lord North was attacked with still more inveteracy; his chariot was torn to pieces, and several spectators say there was a moment in which they thought he must be destroyed. Sir William Meredith, though in Opposition, and a Mr. La Roche, saved him from the fury of the people. He went into the House and spoke with great firmness, and as much coolness. Others were insulted, but not so outrageously. At twelve at night, the Ministers proposed to commit the Lord Mayor only to the Sergeant-at-Arms, on account they said of his ill-health, but, in truth, to avoid extremities; he protested however that he was perfectly well, and chose to accompany his brother Alderman to prison; on which he was sent to the Tower. The Deputy Sergeant who attended him, he had great difficulty to save from the fury of the populace, who insisted on hanging him on a sign-post.

The Ministers are more moderate than their party, who demand extremities. Young Charles Fox, the meteor of these days, and barely twenty-two, is at the head of these strong measures, and equally offends the temperate of his own party and the warm ones

of the Opposition. Sir George Savile left the House, protesting against the persecution of the citizens; and Colonel Barré in plainer terms told the House on Wednesday night, that their conduct was infamous, that no honest man could sit amongst them, and walked away.

The King was excessively hissed yesterday as he went to the House. Charles Fox again narrowly escaped with his life, a large stone being thrown at him, which passed through both the windows of his chariot. Two committees are appointed; one to enforce the powers of the House; the other to inquire into the riots. I wish both do not inflame the riots! The riots will certainly encourage war from abroad, and war will return them the compliment. But it were talking to the winds to urge this!

The House is adjourned to Monday se'nnight, but the committees are to continue sitting. Neither side will probably allow itself holidays; and, when the City of London gives the toast, will neither Ireland nor America pledge it, who are both enough disposed to drink out of the same goblet? Well! still I say, to be sure I grow very old, when I cannot discover the wisdom of these proceedings. They cannot mean quiet and peace, for we had but just obtained both strangely. We seem to be governed by the predominant fashion, gaming. A gamester loses, regains what he had lost, and continues to play on.

Pray whom is your neighbour, the Empress-Queen, going to bet with, for I see she is putting all her troops in motion? The poor people are every where but fish and counters. To what end do modern philosophers write against all this? Kings and Queens never read essays of morality. They only read books of devotion, which are too civil to meddle with crimes of State. Parsons are like the law, and seem to think a King can do no wrong. How their Majesties will stare in the next world, when they come to plead, that their ministers are answerable for all they did in this, and find their plea overruled!

LETTER CLXXIII.

Arlington Street, April 26, 1771.

You may wonder that I have been so silent, when I had announced a war between the House of Commons and the City—nay, when hostilities were actually commenced; but many a campaign languishes that has set out very flippantly. My letters depend on events, and I am like the man in the weather-house who only comes forth on a storm. The wards in the City have complimented the prisoners, and some towns; but the train has not spread much. Wilkes is your only gunpowder that makes an explosion. He and his associates are more incensed at each other than against the Ministry,

and have saved the latter much trouble. The Select Committees have been silent and were forgotten, but there is a talk now of their making some report before the session closes.

The serious war is at last absolutely blown over. Spain has sent us word she is disarming. So are we. Who would have expected that a courtezan at Paris would have prevented a general conflagration? Madame du Barri has compensated for Madame Helen, and is *optima pacis causa*. I will not swear that the torch she snatched from the hands of Spain may not light up a civil war in France. The Princes of the Blood are forbidden the Court. Twelve dukes and peers, of the most complaisant, are banished, or going to be banished; and even the captains of the guard. In short, the King, his mistress, and the Chancellor, have almost left themselves alone at Versailles. But as the most serious events in France have always a ray of ridicule mixed with them, some are to be exiled *to* Paris, and some to St. Germain. How we should laugh at any body being banished to Soho-square and Hammersmith? The Chancellor desired to see the Prince of Conti; the latter replied, "Qu'il lui donnoit rendezvous à la Grève."

If we laugh at the French, they stare at us. Our enormous luxury and expense astonishes them. I carried their Ambassador, and a Comte de Levi, the other morning to see the new winter-Ranelagh* in Oxford Road, which is almost finished. It amazed me myself. Imagine Balbec in all its glory! The pillars are of artificial *giallo antico*. The ceilings, even of the passages, are of the most beautiful stuccos in the best taste of grotesque. The ceilings of the ball-rooms and the panels painted like Raphael's *loggias* in the Vatican. A dome like the pantheon, glazed. It is to cost fifty thousand pounds. Monsieur de Guisnes said to me, "Ce n'est qu'à Londres qu'on peut faire tout cela." It is not quite a proof of the same taste, that two views of Verona, by Canaletti, have been sold by auction for five hundred and fifty guineas; and, what is worse, it is come out that they are copies by Marlow, a disciple of Scott. Both master and scholar are indeed better painters than the Venetian; but the purchasers did not mean to be so well cheated.

The papers will have told you that the wheel of fortune has again brought up Lord Holderness,† who is made governor to the Prince of Wales. The Duchess of Queensberry, a much older veteran, is still figuring in the world, not only by giving frequent balls, but really by her beauty. Reflect, that she was a goddess in Prior's days! I could not help adding these lines on her—you know his end:

> Kitty, at Heart's desire,
> Obtained the chariot for a day,
> And set the world on fire.

This was some fifty-six years ago, or more. I gave her this stanza:

* The Pantheon. † Robert Darcy, last Earl of Holderness.

To many a Kitty, Love his car
Will for a day engage,
But Prior's Kitty, ever fair,
Obtained it for an age!

And she is old enough to be pleased with the compliment.

My brother* has lost his son; and it is no misfortune, though he was but three-and-thirty, and had very good parts; for he was sunk into such a habit of drinking and gaming, that the first ruined his constitution, and the latter would have ruined his father.

Shall I send away this short scroll, or reserve it to the end of the session? No, it is already somewhat obsolete: it shall go, and another short letter shall be the other half of it—so, good night!

LETTER CLXXIV.

Arlington Street, May 8, 1771.

I WISH, my dear sir, I could be as useful to you in solid, as I am in trifling, commissions. I bought your fans the very next day, the best, the most fashionable, and the prettiest I could get, and carried them directly to Mr. Davenport myself. Unluckily, he had sent away your liveries, but promised me the fans should set sail with the first vessel he could find. I have sent you six; two of two guineas, two of a guinea and a-half, and two of one guinea. I went to the utmost because you will be little in my debt, Lord Beauchamp owing me six guineas for the wine you sent him; and I think after all the expenses I have put you to, your conscience need not be much embarrassed about the remaining four guineas.

I wish with all my soul you may obtain an increase of pay, but as it is not to be got from a fan-shop, I doubt nobody could serve you less in that article than I, who never deal at the great warehouses. I am still more awkwardly situated about the offer of your house.† You may probably have heard enough to make you think *I* was just the proper person to make the tender; but for that very reason I am the most unfit. I firmly believe the *solidity* of the connexion I hint at,‡ but not knowing it *authoritatively*, I have most sedulously avoided even the appearance of supposing there is any such connexion at all. It would not become my character to wink at any such thing, and I never will know it, but in a light proper to be known. It is not enough for me to be persuaded that it is strictly honourable; I will run no risk of having a *démenti*. In the mean time, not to neglect your concerns, I have desired Lord Hertford to make the offer, as if coming through him from you. I dare say it will be guessed that it passed through me to him. It will be taken equally well from you,

* Sir Edward Walpole.
† To the Duke of Gloucester, who was expected at Florence.
‡ The marriage between the Duke and Lady Waldegrave.

and will mark at once my *fierté*, and how incapable I am of taking liberties upon so equivocal a footing. In truth, I believe there is no prospect of the journey. The person, who is extremely good and amiable, is in danger of taking a much longer journey. The disorder in his family has settled on his lungs, and produced a confirmed asthma. He falls away every day, and was very near death within this month. I grieve for the fate of the survivor, nor guess what it will be, but it was not in my power to prevent her risking so much!

The Parliament rose suddenly this morning—sudden it was, though advanced but a day—but as the Lord Mayor and Alderman Oliver are at liberty the instant of the prorogation, the King was advised to go to the House to-day before the mob was apprised of it. It was not very dignified counsel; but, in truth, that whole business has been wofully conducted, and has heaped nothing but disgrace on the House of Commons; who, instead of vindicating their authority, have betrayed the utmost pusillanimity. It was begun unadvisedly, and has ended piteously. We are threatened with violent rejoicings and illuminations to-morrow, and, therefore, as we expect much riot, I suppose there will be little, for nothing ever happens that is premeditated; mobs, especially, are the creatures of a moment, not of thought. Wilkes, though he has his rebels like other monarchs, triumphs over the Government and the House of Commons. The latter did not dare to let him appear before them.

The Duke of Choiseul is still more popular against the Court. His head is on every snuff-box, and the women are so violent, that every day the wives of some of the *new* Parliament make them resign their functions. I should not have expected so much sense from him, but the Prince of Conti has made an admirable answer to the Dauphin. The latter said, "Papa, Roi est bien le maître pourtant!" "Oui, Monseigneur," replied the Prince, "et si fort le maître, qu'il peut donner sa couronne à Monsieur le Comte d'Artois."* That is just what Majesty gets when it arrives at its utmost wishes! It overturns the constitution, and then nothing is left to overturn but the succession. The Prætorian, or Preobazinski guards, must achieve the first, and soon learn that *il ne tient qu'à eux* to dispose of the second. I think it very probable that the Chancellor† may not be suffered to wait so long, but may be despatched by the people. *Quieta non movere* was my father's motto, and he never found it was a silly one. However, I am very glad Monsieur de Maupeou and Madame du Barri thought they knew better; they have saved us a war.

Thursday, 9th.

I have had a note from Mr. Davenport to say he would send the fans by the first ship, and that he would write you word he had a parcel for you. I have told him how much haste you are in for them, and begged him to forward them with the utmost expedition.

* Youngest brother of the Dauphin. † Maupeou.

Lord Hertford has made your offer, but the great Duke's will be accepted, who has promised to act like a private friend; so you have all the merit, and avoid the trouble and expense. I wish he may be able to undertake the journey.

Lord Halifax has been at the point of death; but, though out of immediate danger, is said to be incapable of business, and Lord Suffolk, I hear, is to replace him immediately. I do not know that this is true.

The summer, I think, will be so quiet that our correspondence will not be very lively. In July I propose a little journey to Paris for about six weeks. We have had five winters since Christmas, and not an appearance of spring till within these three days. Your snow will soon be compensated by glorious suns; but in England we every year give ourselves airs of being disappointed, though it is so very seldom we have any fine weather. I believe, if we did not read Virgil at school, we should never have invented names for distinctions of seasons. Somebody said lately that the winter was come over to pass the spring in England, but though well said, still it was an air. We live in the Northern Ocean, and our nabobs that plunder the Indies, cannot contrive to import an ounce of eastern climate. Adieu!

Friday morning.

Wednesday night did not pass quietly; besides the rejoicings in the City, the mob demolished all the windows of Sir Fletcher Norton, the Speaker, and a much greater assault'ed Lord North's with threats of pulling it down. The guards were sent for in time; and all is quiet.

LETTER CLXXV.

Strawberry Hill, June 8th, 1771.

I do not believe that Orestes and Pylades were half so punctual correspondents for thirty years together. But do not let us be content and stop here; thirty years more will finish the century; I have no objection to living so long; I hope you have none.

You say I do not cite the dates of your letters, but I did better, I executed your commission the instant I received it, and it is no fault of mine if Madame Santini is not at this moment fanning herself with one of the fans. I should be inexcusable if I neglected the few commissions you give me, when you are so kindly punctual about mine.

Mr. Chute, who dined here to-day, told he had just heard that Lord Halifax is dead. It was hourly expected when I came from town on Thursday. Lord Suffolk was most talked of for his successor; and then the Privy Seal will be contested by two ex-ministers, the Duke of Grafton and Lord Weymouth.

I find you have been a great advocate for Le Fevre's medicine for the gout. He is already quite exploded here; and, about Liege, where he lives they abhor him. He performs none of his promises, but in producing an immediate fit, which can be done without a medicine, Mr. Chute and I are strong bootikinists. He, indeed, is a marvellous proof of their efficacy. He (so many years devoured by gout) has not had a fit in his feet these four years; and when it comes in his hands, though it lasts very long, he never has three days of sharp pain.

I do not know whether the Russian fleet will pass the Dardanelles, but their army *must not* pass the Danube. It is certain that Prince Lobkowitz was sent to Petersburgh to make this declaration in the names of the Empress-Queen and Emperor; and there is such a dearth of roubles in the other Empress' treasury, that she must stoop to the prohibition. The peace itself would be made, yet as there is provision of money and troops made at Constantinople, the Sultan dares not but try another campaign, for fear of an insurrection. I like to see these haughty sovereigns obliged to draw in their talons, or put them forth, whether they will or not.

Some of their representatives are to dine here to-morrow. Indeed you ought to come too: there will be a little *corps diplomatique*—the French, Spanish, and Austrian Ministers. I am sorry this card cannot sail till Tuesday, when it will be too late. Seriously, how happy it would make me to see you here, *salvâ* your *dignitate*. Strawberry is in the most perfect beauty, the verdure exquisite, and the shades venerably extended. I have made a gothic gateway to the garden, the piers of which are of artificial stone, and very respectable. The Round Tower is finished, and magnificent; and the State Bed-chamber proceeds fast; for you must know the little villa is grown into a superb castle. We have dropped all humility in our style: yet, fond as I am of this place, I am going to leave it for some weeks: in short, on another journey to Paris. Nothing, I think, but my dear old woman* could draw me so far; and nothing but her shall I see. The time of year disculpates me from the scandalous surmise of going to divert myself. If the disturbances there should happen to amuse me, why that is excusable in an ancient politician; and no philosopher has forbidden our being entertained with public confusion. I shall, in truth, only look on with the same indifference with which I see our own squabbles. The latter are drawn to the dregs. I shall set out on the 7th of July, and be here again by the end of August. If you write to me in the interval, direct to London; for you know we always have found more difficulty in sending our letters by the straight road than by that round-about. I shall probably write again before I go, though this is not a time of year when I can have much to tell you, and at present less than ever. If Count Orloff takes Constantinople, the bombs will be heard at Paris before they can be reverberated from Florence. Lord Bute is ar-

* Madame du Deffand.

rived in good health, but they say much emaciated, and looking much older. He is going to marry his fourth daughter to Lord Finlater,* the son of our old acquaintance Lord Deskford. The Queen is brought to bed, I think, of a son, but an eighth prince or princess is no body's business but the compiler's of the Court-calender. I am told that at Paris I am to go distracted about the Dauphiness, and to recover my wits by seeing the Comtesse de Province.† Good night! I reserve some paper in case I should learn any European secrets from my guests to-morrow.

Sunday night.

My party has succeeded to admiration, and gothic architecture has received great applause. I will not swear that it has been really admired. I found by Monsieur de Guisnes, that though he had heard much of the house, it was in no favourable light. He had been told it was only built of lath and plaster, and that there were not two rooms together on a level. When I once asked Madame du Deffand what her countrymen said of it, she owned they were not struck with it, but looked upon it as natural enough in a country which had not yet arrived at true taste. In short, I believe they think all the houses they see are gothic, because they are not like that single pattern that reigns in every hotel in Paris; and which made me say there, that I never knew whether I was in the house I was in, or the house I came out of. Two or three rooms in a row, a naked *salle-à-manger*, a white and gold cabinet, with four looking-glasses, a lustre, a scrap of hanging over against the windows, and two rows of chairs, with no variety in the apartments, but from bigger to less, and more or less gilt, and a bed-chamber with a blue or red damask bed; this is that effort of taste to which they think we have not attained—we who have as pure architecture, and as classic taste as there was in Adrian's or Pliny's villas. Monsieur de Guisnes is very civil, and affects to like even our gardens, though I can but doubt whether they do not use more of Nature's beauties than a Frenchman can be brought to feel.

Lord Halifax died yesterday. The Bishop of Osnaburg is to have that riband to which the Earl had never been installed. As there is going to be an installation at the expense of the Crown, the bishop's will be lumped with it, and save such another cost. Lord Hyde,‡ they say, is to be Chancellor of the Duchy, in the room of Lord Strange,§ who died suddenly last week. I don't know how the greater places are to go. If I hear to-morrow, when I shall pass through London in my way to Lord Ossory's I will tell you.

Monday night.

It rains great places and preferments. The Bishop of Durham‖ died last night; but what is that to you or me? You no more desire

* That marriage did not take place. † She was very ugly.
‡ Thomas Villiers, brother of the Earl of Jersey, and afterwards Earl of Clarendon.
§ Only son of the Earl of Derby. ‖ Dr. Trevor.

to be a right-reverend father in God than I to be Secretary of State. Yet how many are hankering after these things, without reflecting that they are more likely to follow in death than in succession! It is excusable in children to cry for rattles; for they don't know how soon they are to part with them. I don't mean by this to give myself any preference in wisdom; I have a house full of play-things, and am as fond of them as any bishop is of his bishoprick.

LETTER CLXXVI.

Strawberry Hill, June 19, 1771.

I ANSWER your letter, as you desire, the moment I receive it, that is, acknowledge the receipt of it; but I am sorry Mr. Davenport's punctuality is not as well ascertained as mine. I have sent him your letter, and wish it may correct him for the future. But do not you deserve to be scolded, too, when you talk of my getting paid? How many score of commissions am I in your debt? Or is this a reprimand, and a prohibition ever to employ you again?

I know no news but newspaper news, which is seldom new but by being false. The Duke of Grafton has certainly got the Privy Seal: it is not being proud.* In France, the Duc d'Aiguillon is at last Minister: it is not being timorous. I expect to find a doleful scene in that country: tyranny and poverty are trying which shall have the honour of conferring total ruin on it. It is fortunate for us that Louis the Well-beloved has preferred Ministers who will undo his own country, to one† who had an ambition of undoing his neighbours; and it is unlucky for Corsica that so amiable a monarch did not make his option sooner. It looks as if he himself was fond of both sorts.

Wilkes seems destined to confound all his adversaries. He carries the palm triumphantly from Horne‡, who has proved a very dull fool—not that I have read half their correspondence; but at least Wilkes maintains his empire over the mob without the benefit of his clergy. The Court profits by their civil war, and we are as quiet as ever I remember the season. Wilkes's canvass for sheriff just stands in place of a considerable horse-race.

I am writing to you in the bow-window of my delicious Round Tower, with your Bianca Capello over against me, and the setting sun behind me, throwing its golden rays all around. Are you never to see this castle? It is not a hovel like Lady Mary Wortley's *châteua*, of which she used to brag to the Florentines. My trees flourish so exuberantly, that I am every day clearing away; and every bough that is lopped lets in new verdure, gaiety and prospect. From such a scene one looks down with contempt or pity on Messieurs Maupeou

* The Duke had been Prime Minister. † The Duke de Choiseul.
‡ Parson Horne.

and D'Aiguillon; with greater on Monsieur de Choiseul, if he is sorry to be at Chanteloup. If he were here at this moment, I would say, "Look at yon sinking beams; his gaudy reign is over; but the silver moon above that elm succeeds to a tranquil horizon, and seems to enjoy the serenity of the evening, with more passionate though with fewer admirers! If she gilds no objects, remember she scorches none."—Oh! a charming idea, no doubt, Monsieur de Choiseul would conceive of the pleasure of sitting in a silent window alone, admiring the changes of an evening landscape, and writing to a distant friend! 'Tis below the dignity of ambition to taste a satisfaction that any common individual may enjoy! Crowds must be witnesses to the luxury of our situation, or it loses its quintessence; and yet I, who was born in the cradle of that greatness M. de Choiseul doats on, thank heaven for having given me no inclination to sacrifice my repose to a chimera! As an acquaintance, the world amuses me; it is horrible to be its master or its slave. Adieu! my dear sir: it will not be long, I hope, before I write to you again from this very spot.

Thursday, June 20.

I have been dining at Lord Buckingham's at Marble Hill.* He has three fine children by his first wife;† and has got a pretty, agreeable young wife;‡ but it was a melancholy day to me, who have passed so many agreeable hours in that house and garden with poor Lady Suffolk.

LETTER CLXXVII.

Arlington Street, Saturday noon, July 6, 1771.

I AM not gone; I do go to-morrow, and this letter will not set out till after me, as there is no foreign post till Tuesday. I only write to tell you that my nephew,§ Lord Cholmondeley, is gone to Spa, and thinks of frisking through Italy before the Parliament meets. If he comes to Florence, I know how kind you will be to him. He is a good young man, and I hope will not make a bad old one; but of that I know nothing—nor ever shall.

We are told the Jesuits are restored in France. *That* I shall know in two three days. Pray take notice that two years ago I foretold this. Nor do I brag of it now, but to show that once in my life at least I guessed right.

Wilkes is another Phœnix revived from his own ashes. He was sunk—it was over with him; but the Ministers too precipitately hur-

* At Twickenham, built by Henrietta Hobart, Countess of Suffolk, aunt of Lord Buckingham, to whom she left it.

† Daughter of Sir Robert Drury. ‡ Sister of W. Conolly, Esq.

§ Only son of George Lord Malpas, who was son of Mary, daughter of Sir Robert Walpole.

rying to bury him alive, blew up the embers, and he is again as formidable as ever; and what will seem worse, he must go into the very closet* whenever the City sends him thither with a message. You and I, and all very wise men, laugh at luck and fatality, and such essences as we know do not exist; but pray let us confess honestly that we cannot wonder if the unilluminated populace are staggered on some occasions. Does there not seem to be a fatality attending the Court whenever they meddle with that man? Does not he always rise higher for their attempting to overwhelm him? What instance is there of such a demagogue, subsisting and maintaining a war against a King, Ministers, courts of law, a whole legislature, and all Scotland, for nine years together? Masaniello did not, I think, last five days. Wilkes, in prison, is chosen member of Parliament, and then Alderman of London. His colleagues betray him, desert him, expose him, and he becomes Sheriff of London. I believe, if he were to be hanged, he would be made King of England—I don't think King of Great Britain.† Well, in the mean time I will go and see the reverse; a whole nation and every Parliament in it in opposition to the Crown, and the courts of law suppressed by the Chancellor. Adieu!

LETTER CLXXVIII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 9, 1771.

I COULD not have laid out my holidays more conveniently (if I may be wicked enough to call a suspension of our correspondence so) than by fixing on the time I did for going to France. Nothing has happened here that would have furnished a letter, and there I heard and saw enough for a volume: I must try to abridge my materials.

For the misery of his people, and for the danger of his successors (if he escapes himself) the King, I think, will triumph over this country: a victory most Kings prefer, not only to peace, but to foreign laurels. The Princes of the Blood are firm, without spirit or sense: the nobility have as little of either; the vigour of parliamentary remonstrances are hushed by the English remedy—bribery; and the people curse the King, the Chancellor, the mistress; and starve. Besancon, Douay, Toulouse, Grenoble, and by this time Bordeaux, have lost their Parliaments, or accepted new ones. In some are erected superior councils—this variety proves how wrong the system is, or how incomplete. The only good attained, is the diminution of law-suits; many preferring to compound their quarrels, rather than apply to the new judicature.

In the mean time the Chancellor does as much hurt *against* all law, as any of his profession ever did *by* law. He is very able, very enterprising, and after being the most servile flatterer, proves

* The King's closet. † Meaning that the Scots hate him too much.

the most inhuman tyrant. Every body is pillaged, and numbers ruined. The army is much reduced, and if corruption does not prevent it, their finances will soon be in good order. The besotted old *Bien-aimé** neither desires this increase of power, nor feels for the sufferings it occasions; but shudders for his own life, and yet lets Abigail, who has still less sense than himself, plunge him into all these difficulties and shame. This street-walker has just received the homage of Europe. The holy Nuncio, and every Ambassador but he of Spain, have waited on her, and brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Fuentes† alone would neither bend the knee to her nor to the Chancellor. The Dauphiness, who is governed by her husband's aunts, paid no regard to her good mother's‡ instructions, and would not speak to the mistress at her presentation. The Duc d'Aiguillon is not so refractory: he not only visits her publicly, but *very privately*—yet he gains little ground with the King. The Chancellor seems to think Devotion a mistress better suited to the monarch's age, and meets him often at Sœur Louise's§ cell at St. Denis. This Princess is undoubtedly a Papal engine. The reform of convents does not proceed: and Sœur Louise is supposed to have affected a considerable disgrace. The Bishop of Orleans, a *bon vivant*, and friend of Choiseul, had the *feuille de benefices*. Madame Victoire drew him into some conversation on the times. He was cautious; yet, as she is a *Frondeuse*, he opened his mind a little to her. She betrayed the conversation to her father, and the prelate is banished to an abbey, and not permitted to go to his mother, who is past fourscore. Madame Victoire's treachery and folly, both to her party and to the bishop, is laid to the saint her sister.

The Duc de Choiseul acts joy, spirits, happiness: receives all the world, treats all the world, and thinks himself not only the greatest Minister, but the most beloved that ever was; not reflecting how foolishly he threw away his power; and insensible to the ruin he is drawing on his friends and on himself too. It has been the fashion to ask leave to visit him. Very few have been refused, but the answer is *Je ne le defends, ni le permets*. This has passed for permission; but the King has said he would remember those who should go,—and he will not want remembrancers. In short, the proscription has already commenced. The Prince of Beauveau is removed from the government of Languedoc, worth 103,000 livres a-year, under pretence that having opposed the fate of the Parliament of Paris, he could not be proper to dissolve that of Toulouse. The Duc de Duras is to lose the government of Bretagne, and I know from very good authority that not one person placed by Choiseul but will be removed within a year. His own Swiss Guards are to be taken away, *bongré, malgré*.

This prospect is by no means unfavourable to *us*. France and Spain on cool terms; the army no longer the favourite object,—per-

* Louis the Fifteenth.
† The Spanish ambassador. ‡ The Empress Queen.
§ The King's youngest daughter, who was a Carmelite nun.

haps disgusted—certainly dispirited, and liable to be soured by the crowds of discontented,—the *Vive le Roi* certainly extinguished for the present; a dauphin more unpromising; an old King, like Hercules betwixt virtue and vice, torn different ways by a bigot-daughter and an idiot mistress; a government dissolved and not resettled; and, to crown all, a divided and rival Ministry. I do not think the Duc d'Aiguillon of abilities to reconcile this chaos. He is very gracious, but very dark, and *by some circumstances*, I believe so great a politician, that he is a very little one; that is, he will spring a mine to blow up an ant-hill.

This is a slight sketch of my observations. Paris suffers grievously; the ruin of so many fortunes has introduced the severest economy. The retirement of the Parliament, and the numbers that depended on them, has carried away, they say, forty thousand persons. Even fashion and whim are out of fashion. I heard of but one instance of remaining luxury: Mademoiselle Guimare, a favourite dancer, now belonging to the Prince de Soubize, and lately to the Bishop of Orleans, who kept her in lodgings within the precincts of a convent, is building a magnificent house. The *salle à manger* is to have *des serres chauds* round it, with windows opening into the room, that she may have orange-flowers and odours all the winter.

As your own country is never behind the rest of the world in extravagance and folly, I must tell you of a set of young men of fashion, who, dining lately at the St. Alban's tavern, thought the noise of the coaches troublesome. They ordered the street to be littered with straw, as is done for women that lie in. The bill from the Haymarket amounted to fifty shillings a-piece; methinks I am glad the Carabiniers, and the Grenadiers of France are cashiered,—the sight of them before a tavern would make our young men miscarry.

I arrived but last Friday, and am delighted with a wedding that is going to be in my family. Lord Villiers, only son of Lady Grandison, a very rich Irish peeress, is going to marry Lady Gertrude Conway, Lord Hertford's eldest unmarried daughter. She is very pretty, though not so beautiful as her two next sisters. The bridegroom is well enough in his person, sensible enough, and very good-natured. I know you interest yourself in whatever pleases me, and therefore I tell it you, though you know neither of the turtles.

Pray what is become of Constantinople? Are the Russians to be taking it and taking it as long as the Greeks Troy-town? This is the third summer that the Russians have been *sauntering* towards Turkish capital.

I beg against the proper season you will send me a parcel of roots of Iris. They are for my dear old friend at Paris to put into sweet bags. Adieu!

LETTER CLXXIX.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 26, 1771.

I AM sorry that so watchful a cat should have let its mouse* slip at last, without knowing into what hole it is run. To the Dissidents in Poland! think you?—why, they have not a cheese-paring left. I should rather think to Spain, and to be wafted to Ireland. King Carlos is absurd, mortified, angry, disappointed, and obstinate: intends, soon or late, to attack us, and may have pitched on the Pretender for his pioneer. If it should be so, it will be diverting to hear the loyal ejaculations of the Scotch, nay, of even more than one in each family: I question if my Lord Dunbart himself is a Jacobite now—except in principle. Should I guess right, you must positively come home; you prevented his receiving the crown of England at Rome, and must now keep him from reaching it at Dublin. I know nothing in his favour but the rule of contraries—as his father missed the crown when Queen Anne was on his side: and he himself when all Scotland and half England were Jacobites, when he had conquered his way to Derby, and almost every thing but his own fears; he may be more fortunate when even the University of Oxford scarce drinks his health. But no, this is an age in which all Kings light upon their legs: the Czarina lives yet; the King of Portugal has survived the expulsion of the Jesuits; the King of Prussia escaped from twenty battles, and the *well-beloved* Louis from the rage of a dozen demolished Parliaments. I had forgot,—not all Kings in this age,—poor Peter III. did not escape from his wife.

Apropos, I hear that the Parliament of Bordeaux has made as much stand as they could, and enough to frighten the victorious Richelieu out of the remains of his old senses. They said they knew not what he meant by *lettres de cachet*, they acknowledge no such power. He retreated to his seat at Fronsac, and has despatched a courier to Versailles for a squadron of powers. I suppose it will end in his plundering the city, and building a new *pavillon* in his garden; do you know they call that which he erected with the spoils of the Electorate, *La Pavillon d'Hanover?*‡ I have seen it; there is a chamber surrounded with looking-glasses, and hung with white lutestring painted with roses; I wish you could see the antiquated Rinaldo that has built himself this romantic bower! Looking-glass never yet reflected so many wrinkles: you would think Rinaldo had lived till now.

I am very sorry to confirm poor Mr. Grey's death. He died of the gout in his stomach; I fear, partly by quacking himself, and partly by the horrible neglect of the Professor of Physic at Cambridge, who would not rise out of his bed to assist him. He has left nothing

* The Pretender had suddenly disappeared from Florence, and it was not known whither he was gone.

† Lord Mansfield's brother.

‡ On the Boulevard des Italiens at Paris.—ED.

finished; in truth, he finished every thing so highly, and laboured all his works so long, that I am the less surprised.

We have nothing in the shape of news, for I do not reckon the factions in the City of London, which is divided and subdivided amongst a parcel of people, whose names are almost all unknown but to themselves. The papers are filled with their squabbles, but I never read such annals! They would tire the voluminous patience of Holinshed and Stowe.

We do not believe your Russian naval victory; it is a tedious war, and dull enough to afford the invention of another game of chess. Your brother the Emperor is still more unintelligible: what is he doing with his armies, and marches and counter marches without an enemy?

You have received, I hope, the letter I wrote to you immediately on my return from Paris. Monsieur de Boisgelin was just returned thither, being recalled in anger, for meddling impertinently in some court-squabbles at Parma: I heard the detail, but have forgotten it—one cannot be looking through a microscope at the politics of such a diminutive Government. Our correspondence is revived, but I am always glad when it wants forage.

LETTER CLXXX.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 22, 1771.

The clouds that concealed the Pretender's elopement seem to disperse. It is affirmed that he is in the *Highlands* of Poland, with the *Catholics* and *Dissidents*. I hear from Paris that his cousin, the Marquis de Fitz-James, is going to him with a commission from Louis the *well-behated*. When I was there, I know they were sending to Poland between twenty and thirty officers, headed by a Monsieur de Vieumenil, reckoned one of the best military heads. I do not comprehend it, and pity the poor *true blue* Sobieskists, who are to be betrayed and drawn into their destruction by this handful, like the Jacobites in Scotland. One wants, indeed, many other lights: if the Emperor and King of Prussia approve this plan, what can thirty Frenchmen add to it? If they do not, what can that diminutive troop effect in opposition? France is wofully fallen indeed, if, after arming the Ottoman Sultan against the Czarina, they are reduced to play off this puppet against her. 'Tis the lap-dog that yelps when mastiffs are worrying one another. I am curious, however, to see farther into the scuffle. If what I have told you proves true, I shall no longer believe Spain concerned in the project. Fuentes and Caraccioli* persist in refusing their homage to Madame du Barri. The Duc d'Aiguillon thinks he has made her amends by insisting on his mother visiting her. I pity the old duchess, who had held out

* Neopolitan minister at Paris.

nobly. It is a worthy act of duty in a son! The Abbé Terray has recovered his ground, but at the expense of sacrificing his mistress, a Madame de la Garde, who scandalized a Court where the Du Barri triumphs. This creature, and a Madame Sabatin, mistress of the Duc de la Vrillière, kept open shops for the disposal of preferments. The three Sultanas were called *Les Trois Dis-Graces.*

Mr.* and Mrs. Hamilton from Naples passed one day last week here, and I left them this morning at Park Place. She looks better, but the climate affects her strangely. Vesuvius has burnt him to a cinder.

I have no news to tell you. You know as much of Wilkes and Townshend as I do, from their memorials in the newspapers. The famous *Junius* seems at last to issue from the shop of the former, though the composition is certainly above Wilkes himself. The styles are often blended, and very distinguishable, but no body knows who it is that deigns to fight in disguise under Wilkes's banner. So far this *unknown* knight will not resemble his predecessors in romance, that he probably will not disclose himself and demand *the Princess*† in marriage.

This letter, short as it is, must depart; I have nothing to add to it. I live chiefly here, and alone; and though I can amuse myself, it is not so easy to amuse others with the history of solitary hours. My house is comfortable and charming, and except the great bedchamber on which I am at work, quite finished. I go but little abroad, for as I told Mrs. Hamilton, and she agreed to it, our climate is delightful *when framed and glazed*, that is, beautiful through a window. Thus my time steals away peaceably and agreeably, but is not a theme for a letter; and, therefore, when I am reduced to talk of myself, and have nothing to say of myself, it is time to bid you adieu!

October 24th,

I was just going to send this letter to London for the post to-morrow, when I received yours of the 24th of last month, with the enclosed deputation.‡

LETTER CLXXXI.

Arlington Street, Nov. 7, 1771.

I SCARCE know where to begin, and I know not what to say on all the melancholy and strange events that I heard yesterday. My deputy§ died suddenly on Monday, and it brought me to town. On

* Afterwards Sir William.

† The Princess of Wales was much abused in the satirical writings of that time, particularly in Wilkes's.

‡ For the nephew to be his uncle's proxy at the installation of Knights of the Bath.

§ Grosvenor Bedford, Esq.

my way I called at Holland House; Lord Holland's servant came in and said the Duke of Gloucester was dead. When I arrived here, I found your two letters, in which you give me so particular and sensible an account of his illness, and of the very attentive and proper part you have acted. The instant I had dined I went to Lord Hertford, who told me no confirmation was come of the Duke's death; but he, as well as I, from your letters, conclude it over!—But, unfortunate as this event is, what will be your astonishment, when at the same time I tell you that the very same moment brought to light, at least to the public, an event that made that loss almost overlooked? In short, the Duke of Cumberland, as rash and absurd as the Duke of Gloucester was decent, prudent, and amiable, went off, last Friday the first, to Calais, and wrote to the King, that he was married to Mrs. Haughton*, and that she was *enceinte*, and gone with him. You know of no Mrs. Haughton but the Duke of Grafton's Mrs. Haughton, the Duke of Dorset's Mrs. Haughton, every body's Mrs. Haughton—faith I do not know whether it would have been so improper a Mrs. Haughton as her he has married—and yet this is a woman of virtue! But think what a bitter pill to the Royal Family, when you hear it is the sister of the very Colonel Lutterel whom the Court crammed into the House of Commons in the room of Wilkes—so fatal is that man to the Crown, and such triumphs start up for him, even whenever he is at the lowest ebb. Think how he will exult at the Court's being lashed with the instrument they prepared for him!—no mortification can equal it! But what will you say to this mad boy, when you know, that if the world says true, his mother was thought at the point of death at the very instant he chose to make his declaration. All last week it was affirmed that she has a cancer in her mouth, and that it was got into her throat. She, however, went to the King at Richmond on Sunday. What a dreadful catastrophe; if she *is* dying, to learn the death of so respectable a son, and such a completion of folly in another son, who had already furnished such matter for abuse![†] as Shakspeare says,

> The funeral baked meats
> Will coldly furnish forth the marriage supper.

The new Princess of the Blood is a young widow of twenty-four, extremely pretty, not handsome, very well made, with the most amorous eyes in the world, and eyelashes a yard long. Coquette beyond measure, artful as Cleopatra, and completely mistress of all her passions and projects. Indeed, eyelashes three quarters of a yard shorter would have served to conquer such a head as she has turned. I need not hint to you how unfortunate an event this is at the present moment, and how terribly it clashes with the situation of another person![‡] a person whom I most heartily pity, and whom I did all I

* The name was Horton, not Haughton. She did not prove *enceinte*. She was the widow of — Horton, Esq., of Catton, in Staffordshire—Ed.

† By his intrigue with, and letters to Lady Grosvenor.

‡ Lady Waldegrave, married to the Duke of Gloucester.—Ed.

could to preserve from falling into so cruel a position. I know not what she will, or is to do! You it is possible by this time may know more than I do—at least I surmise so by the command laid on the physicians to notify the worst.

Well! altogether here is a strange scene opened! The circumstances make it different from any thing history can furnish; and I wish history may not have more to do with the consequences! Had the Pretender met the younger brother at Genoa the other day, instead of the elder, and laughed, I should not have wondered. How singular too that the Duke of York should land and die at Monaco, and the Duke of Gloucester at Leghorn! But reflections rise on reflections, and what has happened almost makes one superstitious, and what may happen makes one almost prophecy. We expect the fatal courier every hour, and as this letter cannot depart until to-morrow, I will say no more to-day on this extraordinary crisis.

You will certainly have no occasion to think of your installation now for some time. Your brother sent me a mighty sugared answer to my letter, and has written to your nephew to be your proxy. I hope heartily that he will accept it. The person recommended to you is by no means a proper representative for you: he is an apothecary's son, and was forced into the place he enjoys by the late Duke of York, whose intimacies were the prototype of Mrs. Haughton's consort. I doubt your nephew must be knighted, which I imagine was a great object with your candidate: but as your nephew must have your title, he can surely not hesitate to make a step towards it. We shall have full time to discuss all these matters. Thank you for the roots of iris.

Alderman Townshend has refused to pay the land-tax, on pretence that Lutterel's election deprives the county of Middlesex of being represented. His goods are seized, and the cause would have always made noise enough—what will it not make now, when the royal wedding is coupled with it? I begin to question whether this will be the *age of abortions*, as I have always called it, and hitherto always found it. Methinks it will rather be the age of seeds that are to produce strange crops hereafter.

Friday, 8th.

The courier that arrived yesterday has made every body happy with the fortunate news that the Duke of Gloucester was out of danger on the 25th. The King is so overjoyed, that he seems to forget the other misfortune, and all the world does justice to the merit of the recovering Prince. I would fain flatter myself it will last. I am impatient for another letter from you to confirm the good news. Adieu.

LETTER CLXXXII.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 18, 1771.

It is but just to acknowledge the good news you send us. I rejoice very disinterestedly at the Duke of Gloucester's recovery. I put no trust in princes: I doubt, I may add, for there is *no health* in them. Nor shall I be surprised if all the flattering symptoms vanish, and, in a few posts, contradict the prognostics of the surgeons. The Princess is said to be much relieved by taking hemlock. For the third object of the present curiosity, deep silence is observed at Court on that point. The public is not so reserved; a thousand tales are coined, which I spare you, for I have neither seen nor heard any thing that had wit enough to deserve being sent so far. Indeed, as I pass my time here chiefly and alone, you will not wonder that I do not even know where the new Court* resides: the last place named was Arras.

You please me with the kind things you say of my nephew, Lord Cholmondeley. He is amiable and seems good. I do not pretend to judge of such young men, who do not easily take to us *ancestors;* but it would be a satisfaction to me not to have all my nepotism as worthless as if I were a Pope. If Lord Cholmondeley goes to Rome, pray tell him I wish he would bring me a head of himself, by Pompeio Battoni.

We are again bickering, I think, with Spain; but a spark here, and a cinder there, do not make a bonfire. King Carlos hates us ever since Naples; but we have a navy that, while it adds to the provocation, does not tempt him to display his anger too openly. Your old friend, Lord Sandwich, is activity, industry, and knowledge, in person; and the most proper man in the world to be at the head of the Marine.

I have heard nothing from your brother, or of your nephew. I fear the latter is negligent; for I cannot conceive his having any aversion to the commission. It is, hitherto, of no consequence, but in preventing me from giving an answer to Lord Rochford.

Mr. Hamilton's *Correggio* is arrived. I have seen it: it is divine—and so is the price; for nothing but a demi-god, or a demi-devil, that is, a nabob, can purchase it. What do you think of three thousand pounds? It has all Correggio's grace, and none of his grimace, which, like Shakspeare, he is too apt to blend and confound. I myself expect a treasure to-morrow, a complete suit of armour of Francis the First,† which I have bought out of the Crozat collection. It will

* Of the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland.

† This beautiful specimen of art was the work of Benvenuto Cellini. It was complete to the knees. The material is steel inlaid with gold, and enriched with bas-reliefs of battle and hunting subjects, of most elaborate design and exquisite taste. It was sold at the memorable dispersion of the treasures of Strawberry Hill, for 320*l.* 5*s.*—Ed.

make a great figure here at Otranto. Mr. Chute is come to welcome the Monarch at his landing. It is cruel to me never to see *you* here: what an addition would it be to the tranquillity I have had the sense to give myself! It would be delicious, if Time did not disperse or carry off one's friends and contemporaries. As to young acquaintance, there is no uniting the conversation of different ages. One is checked every moment: one cannot make an allusion to what one has seen, without being reduced to explanations that become, or seem to them, old stories. The times immediately preceding their own are what all men are least acquainted with. A young man knows Romulus better than George the Second. On the other hand, the young have new words, new language, new amusements; and one can no more talk their talk, than dance their dances. *You* and *I* could at least talk of a rigadoon, or of Booth and Mrs. Oldfield; and, were you your own master, methinks you would prefer it to name-days and christenings of baby future sovereigns. It amazes me when I see men, by choice, push on towards a succession of courts. Ambition should be a passion of youth; not, as it generally is, of the end of life. What joy can it be to govern the grand-children of our contemporaries? It is but being a more magnificent kind of schoolmaster. I was told that I should regret quitting my seat in Parliament; but I knew myself better than those prophets did. Four years are past; and I have done nothing but applaud my resolution. When I compare my situation with my former agitated and turbulent life, I wonder how I had spirits to go through the former, or how I can be charmed with the latter without having lost those spirits.

Arlington Street, Nov. 21st.

The town furnishes no more than the country, and is almost as empty. The wandering Court is again at Calais; where the Prince has given a ball to the garrison. 'Tis piteous,—ay, and too silly to talk of. Adieu!

LETTER CLXXXIII.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 15, 1771.

I AM vexed that you have not had perfect contentment about your Pisan Palace; yet I am persuaded that no incivility was meant, for the prince is naturally obliging: but I will say no more on this subject. The other brother is returned with his wife; has been privately forbidden the Court; and it has been intimated, as a general secret which every body is expected to know, that the same persons must not go to St. James's and to the new married couple. The Princess Dowager is said to be much better.

A *public* brother of yours is going to be your brother in another sense: the Duke of Chandos's red riband is to be given to Mr. Hamil-

ton, *from Naples*, and Sir Francis Delaval's to Sir Charles Hotham: yet I don't believe the installation will be advanced. Your *real* brother says not a word of your nephew; I don't know whether he is more communicative to you.

The Ministers are in great joy: news of the restoration of Falkland's Island to us is arrived. It ought to be general joy, for it secures peace. There have been endeavours to persuade both us and Spain that we were out of humour with one another, but neither country would take the hint. Thus all our storms are blown over, except in Ireland, and that does not seem to threaten much, for the money-bills are passed, and, consequently, the Opposition are at the King's mercy, as he might now prorogue their Parliament without inconvenience to himself. What ten years of vexation might have been avoided, if folks would have adhered to my father's maxim of *Quieta non movere!*

What do you say to the rape and almost murder of the King of Poland? I should think it must alarm King Louis's old wound, which is very apt to quiver. I hear he says, that he would not for a great deal play so deep a game as his Chancellor does. The other assassinated Monarch's* Prime Minister has been in danger too—Œyras. There is no harm if such tyrants as Œyras and Maupeou are frightened a little.

Dec. 17.

I was in hopes of thanking you for the receipt of the pictures and iris roots, for the ships are arrived, but I have not got the things from the Custom-house. However, there is no being too premature with gratitude, and I do thank you very much *d'avance*.

By a more authentic account that Princess Amelia gave me last night, there seems to be small chance of another Princess's recovery.†

We are so much accustomed to politics, that people do not know how to behave under the present cessation. We can go into the City without being mobbed, and through Brentford without "No. 45" on one's coach-door. Wilkes is almost as dead as Sacheverell, though Sheriff. You will not be sorry that I have no more to tell you, and consequently will excuse the shortness of this, but one cannot make letters without political straw.

LETTER CLXXXIV.

Arlington Street, Dec. 28th, 1771.

I THIS minute receive yours of the 9th, from Pisa, and am much concerned at the account you give of the Duke's alarming situation. Though I have not the honour of knowing him, it is impossible not to feel for his danger, as it is impossible not to respect his character.

* Of Portugal.

† The Princess-Dowager of Wales.

I thought, as the physical folks here did too, that his recent attack would remove the malady, but I now doubt it very much. He certainly apprehends his own danger, and has, I suppose, other reasons to add to his low spirits; but I cannot believe, as you think, that he is ignorant of what has happened: that history, for many reasons, is more likely to have added to his unhappiness. You, my dear sir, I fear, for I seem to perceive, though you do not express it, are not without difficulties.

Pray assure Lord Cholmondeley how very kindly I take his messages, and how pleased I shall always be with any marks of his affection. The great difference of our ages prevents my flattering myself that his should be great, and it is to avoid being importunate that I do not trouble him much with marks of mine; but he may be sure of it, whenever he thinks it worth his while to seek it. I wish you would read this paragraph to him without telling him I desired you to do so. It is for his sake, between you and me, that I wish him to cultivate me a little more than he does. At the same time, I own to you that I do not esteem him the less for his not paying court to me; and should he become more attentive on your hints, I should still make allowance for that, as I have seen that his nature is not interested. I have lived too long to expect more than natural good disposition. It is not flattery I want, but so much intimacy with him as might give me opportunities of knowing him better; for though he is the relation on whom it would suit me best to fix my views, I cannot place them on an almost stranger, nor would think of it without another point that I wish could be brought about too. You will oblige me, therefore, my dear sir, extremely, if, after reading to him the passage above, you were to hint to him, that it would be prudent in him to make me his friend.

This must be absolutely from yourself, for I would not for the world enter into any engagements to him which I might afterwards disappoint, though from his own fault. Be so kind to us both as to sound him on his thoughts of marriage, and whether rank, beauty, or fortune, is his object. I have a person in my eye who has both the former, and who has had the best education, and has the most charming character, with uncommon sense and prudence.* Fortune he will not want when the General† dies: but his consent must be fully granted, and therefore before I attempt any overture, I wish to know my nephew's mind, and then I would sound the General. You will see the extreme delicacy of all this, and I leave it totally to your discretion.

With regard to your own affair, I like your idea about the want of knighthood in the person who has applied to be your proxy; but for that very reason, I would be silent on it till the time is fixed, that

* It is believed that the person here alluded to was the eldest daughter of his niece the Duchess of Gloucester by her first husband, Lord Waldegrave. She afterwards married the Earl of Euston, the present Duke of Grafton.—Ed.

† General James Cholmondeley, great uncle of Lord Cholmondeley.

he may not acquire it in the interim; and therefore I will not deliver your message to the Earl* till then.

I have received Mr. Patch's pictures, and like them very well, but I think they are a little hard. I speak plainly, that he may correct. Thank you much for them; I should like to pay for them, if I thought you would allow me. The engravings from Fra. Bartolomeo disappoint me: I see none of the great ideas I thought I remembered in him: at least he is far below the amazing Masaccio. They are well engraved, except wanting a little more strength. The iris roots are still performing quarantine; but there is no haste.

News we have none, except from Ireland, where the Opposition gain frequent victories by the absurdity of Lord Townsend.†

The Princess Dowager is much better, and it is thought in no immediate danger.

The Swiss‡ are at last taken from the Duc de Choiseul, who resigned them handsomely, without haggling. It has softened his fall extremely. They give him three hundred thousand livres down, sixty more for life, and thirty to Madame de Choiseul, if she survives him. It is the exit of an English Minister, rather than of a French one.

Little Sorbe, the Genoese Minister at Paris, where he was born when his father was in the same character, is dead suddenly. It was a dirty, intriguing, sensible creature. I mention him because he was the vermin that instigated Choiseul to invade Corsica; and therefore his death, if sudden, was, at least, not early enough. Europe, Asia, and America, do not furnish me with another paragraph, though we have such magnificent fields for our correspondence. Good night, therefore, from one end of the world to the other! Yours *ubique.*

LETTER CLXXXV.

Arlington Street, Jan. 14, 1772.

Sir Charles Hotham and Mr. Hamilton are to receive their ribands to-morrow, but certainly no installation will follow soon.

Do not be concerned at your nephew's want of attention to me: I am too old and too indifferent to every thing that does not disturb my tranquillity, which has long ceased to depend on the actions of others. One's mind suffers only when one is young, and while one is ignorant of the world. When one has lived some time, one learns that the young think too little, and the old too much, and one grows careless about both. I at least have contracted an ease in my temper, which diverts itself with most things, and takes few to heart. I think of my own nephew and yours with the same composure, as you saw by a letter I wrote to you lately. The friend the former

* Lord Rochford had recommended a person to Sir Horace Mann for his proxy.
† The Lord Lieutenant. ‡ The command of the Swiss Guards.

has got is far from a proper one; I know a horrible story of him in his own family; but as I do not believe much in the duration of friendships, theirs will probably die away like others. For the fashionable discourse of young people, it is the nonsense of the moment. What is called *bon ton* is generally the tone of people that have not yet got into good company, because an affected tone is never used by really good company. Young men of sense lose it soon; young men who have not sense keep it even after it has ceased to be any body's tone. Indeed, what is fashion? Is not it a persuasion that nothing was ever right till the present moment, and that the present moment will immediately be as wrong as all its predecessors? And can such a system be but absurd? And what notice does absurdity deserve more than being laughed at for an instant?

The current of time hurries every thing along with it, and if we have the patience to sit still and see it pass, it is sure of washing away our vexations, as well as our pleasures; and both being dreams, are not worth remembrance. I have attained so much habitual philosophy (for I believe in no other) that events which would formerly have distressed me exceedingly, do not now put me out of temper; as I experienced last week. A dozen powder mills within two miles of Twickenham blew up last week, and almost levelled my castle as low as Troy. This is far from true; but the explosion really demolished four of my windows of painted glass, and broke as many more. I neither stomached it like a Stoic, nor d——d the undertaker of the mills like a Christain. I shall set about mending them with the patience of Penelope, though with the prospect of having them ruined again, for, as Mr. Bentley* said, in this country *abuses are freeholds*, and I do not believe the neighbourhood will get the mills removed. The Duke of Northumberland,† to raise his rent a trifle, obtained an Act of Parliament for this nuisance; indeed, he got the consent of the gentlemen within the circuit, by promising they should be corn-mills; but the act was no sooner passed, than lo! they became powder-mills! and have torn the whole country to pieces!

The Parliament meets next week. There will, I think, be little to do, unless an attempt to set aside the subscription of the clergy to the Thirty-nine Articles should stir up a storm. Religious disputes are serious; and yet, can one care about shades of nonsense? Adieu!

LETTER CLXXXVI.

Arlington Street, January 21, 1772.

I MUST set you right, my dear sir, in an error into which I innocently led you; and am glad to be able to do it, as I am happy to

* Richard, only son of Dr. Bentley, Master of Trinity College Cambridge.

† Sir Hugh Smithson, who on marrying the heiress of Algernon, Duke of Somerset who was son of the heiress of the Earls of Northumberland, was created Earl, and then Duke of Northumberland.

find that a son of your dear brother is not always in the wrong. Your brother Edward never mentioned the proxyhood to Horace. This totally disculpates your nephew, who has now, in a very civil letter to me, handsomely and cheerfully accepted the office. This is the best I have to say on the chapter of nephews.

I doubt Lord Chatham has given you no reason to make a panegyric on him. The ghost of old Horace would chuckle at the little regard I met with from my nephews and nieces. Yet, will that not put us on a footing? The endeavours of my life have been to make them happy, rich and great, to save them from ruin and distress; not to cheat them of heiresses, and defraud them of estates entailed on them.

I am more wounded at the neglect shown to *you;* nor can I account for it. It is out of character, and cruel. If I can guess at all at the person on whom your suspicion lights, it is a titular at Leghorn; but why not fathom it? One should be as much afraid of suspecting a friend wrongfully, as of finding him in the wrong. I know nothing of the man, but the zeal he showed about your riband: nor can I conceive how he should have influence enough to hurt you. It is a mystery which I cannot unravel.

I wish you were not exposed to these *désagrémens!* It has been my wonder how you could support the pertness and folly of all the youths who debark at Florence, and of all that govern them. Your fortune, I know, and am grieved, my dear sir, to know, is very moderate; but sure, as you are not young, tranquillity is the best riches. What are rank and fortune, if they do not secure content?

I was born at the top of the world; I have long been nobody, and am charmed to be so. I see the insolence of superiors; but how does it hurt me? They can neither frighten me, nor deprive me of any enjoyment. I laugh at their dignity, which I generally see built or leaning on meanness and slavery; and which is best founded, their contempt or mine? To be determined to be content with little, is to determine that one's happiness shall depend on no one but one's-self; but, if consideration is one's point, I do not see why one should be satisfied without being emperor of the world. One superior would mortify me more than a thousand inferiors homaging me would contribute to my satisfaction; but when one is emperor of one's-self all is harmony and sunshine. And depend upon it, a moderate fortune is more capable of bestowing and ensuring that reign, than any position of grandeur. Were I rich, my nephews and nieces would be attentive and sincere enough; I like better to know their hearts.

We have no news; but to day is the birth-day of news: the Parliament meets; indeed, with a quiet aspect. Old Northington is dead, as he lived, cursing and swearing. He had taken an aversion to his son, and ordered the trees in the park to be cut down. The gardener, trusting to the proximity of his death, demurred. He perceived it, and turned him away: repeated his orders, but found that a dying lawyer could not quicken other people, more than other people can quicken a living lawyer. His servants went so slowly to work that only five oaks attended his funeral.

LETTER CLXXXVII.

Arlington Street, February 3, 1772.

Your representative Majesty will be shocked to find how frequently your *family** furnishes Europe with very unpleasant conversation. We are all gazing on what has happened in Denmark, where the Queen and her medical Prime Minister† have been seized; the former imprisoned, and the latter loaded with irons. It is certain that fame has been busy with their amours these two years—it is as certain that nothing is weaker than the little King; yet, as I look on revolutions as I do on private quarrels, in which both sides are generally in the wrong, I do not doubt but that it will come out that Her Majesty's *galantry* has been amply balanced by ambition and treachery. The Queen Dowager and her son, who have been brought forward, are both said not to excel the King in capacity; and if so, are only phantoms to decorate the conspiracy; but little is known yet, nor could I tell you much more than you will see in the public papers.

This tempest has clouded the halcyon calm that accompanies the opening of the session, where the voice of Opposition is no longer heard. In truth, the calamities of the Royal Family are much to be pitied, and the conclusion of the Princess's‡ life is very melancholy. I have heard nothing of her this morning, but yesterday she was thought near her end. We every day expect like news from Naples.§ The news of Princess Mary's‖ death came a week ago. She had long been ill, and never happy, though a most gentle and amiable being. There remains only Princess Amelia now of all the late King's children.

Friday, 7th.

I was ashamed to send away such a scrap, and therefore stayed till to-day's post to recruit it. The last accounts from Naples speak of the Duke of Gloucester as better; but for the Princess of Wales, I do not know at this moment whether she is not dead. She was last night at the extremity, and this morning the King forbade his levée. Her end has been expected these ten days; yet her courage was so great that she went out to take the air on Monday or Tuesday.

No more news yet from Denmark, which is extraordinary; but one should think, therefore, that nothing tragic has happened, or Mr. Keith would have despatched messengers faster. You may imagine the impatience of every body to hear more of this strange revolution.

Yesterday there was a long debate, for *this* session, in the House of Commons. A petition was offered from two hundred and fifty divines, for abolition of the Thirty-nine Articles, that summary of impertinent folly. It was rejected at eleven at night by a large majori-

* Meaning the English Royal Family, which Sir Horace Mann represented at Florence.

† Struensee, the King's physician. ‡ The Princess Dowager of Wales.

§ Of the Duke of Gloucester.

‖ Landgravine of Hesse, fourth daughter of George II.

ty; so much more difficult is it to expel nonsense than sense—for sense makes few martyrs. Will not the Jesuits think it hard upon them, that we are more absurd than France, or even than Spain? I begin to think that folly is matter, and cannot be annihilated. Destroy its form, it takes another. The reformation was only a re-formation. It is happy when attempts to serve or enlighten mankind do not produce more prejudice to them. What are the consequences of the writings of the philosophers, and of the struggles of the Parliaments in France? Despotism! Lawyers have been found to support it, and priests will not be wanting. Methinks it would be a good text for the gallows, "Upon this hang all the law and the prophets."

The Czarina has sent Lord Chesterfield a box of her own turning, *ornée*, says she vulgarly, *de son portrait*. It is in return for some compliments he paid her to her Ambassador. What miserable thirst of pedantic vain-glory! How sorry one should be to be obliged to answer civilly! What pains people take to have every thing but common sense!

LETTER CLXXXVIII.

Arlington Street, Wednesday, February 12, 1772.

The Princess Dowager died on Saturday morning. Nothing ever equalled her resolution. She took the air till within four or five days of her death, and never indicated having the least idea of her danger, even to the Princess of Brunswick, though she had sent for her. Although she had convulsions the day before she expired, she rose and dressed to receive the King and Queen, and kept them four hours in indifferent conversation, though almost inarticulate herself; said nothing on her situation, took no leave of them, and expired at six in the morning without a groan. She could not be unapprised of her approaching fate, for she had existed upon cordials alone for ten days, from the time she had received the fatal news from Denmark! and died before she could hear again of her daughter.

The courier arrived in the evening; the new governing powers, whoever they are, whether the conspirators under the name of the Queen Dowager, or whether that woman herself, have determined to manage the young Queen's honour as much as possible, but to press home the charge on Struensee for intending to drug the King's understanding in order to draw from him a cession of the Regency to that Physician-minister—a plan that, affecting decency, establishes the outrage—a plan, too, very difficult to believe; unless both the Queen and physician had taken drugs to intoxicate themselves first. Count Ostein, your late neighbour at Naples, is said to be deep in the revolution, as Sir William Hamilton told me he was sure it would appear; nay, on his first coming over, he mentioned this man to me as the genius of intrigue.

Our halcyon days are already clouded; the tempest has again risen in Ireland. Yesterday's letters from thence say their Parliament is outrageous on a new Board erected there: they talk of sending a deputation of twenty-one members of the Commons to remonstrate to the King against it. Lord Townsend has occasioned all these troubles by the most extravagant behaviour. He lives with a carpenter and two more low fellows, and has written a satirical ballad on the chief men there, a mark of contempt that even money will not wipe out. The East Indies are going to be another spot of contention. Such a scene of tyranny and plunder has been opened as makes one shudder! *The heaven-born hero,** Lord Clive, seems to be Plutus, the dæmon who does not give, but engrosses riches. There is a letter from one of his associates to their Great Mogul, in which *our Christian* expresses himself with singular tenderness for the interests of the Mehometan religion! We are Spaniards in our lust for gold, and Dutch in our delicacy of obtaining it.

A terrible blow, which I have long foreseen, has fallen on Lord Hertford's family. His daughter-in-law,† a most amiable and good young woman, is dead, and her husband half distracted for his loss. You will pity Lord Hertford's situation: his daughter, Lady Gertrude was married to Lord Villiers on Monday morning, Lady Beauchamp died on Tuesday, and the Princess is to be buried on Saturday, for which, as Lord Chamberlain, he must give all the orders.

I cannot certainly refuse, when *you* ask it, to let Mr. Patch inscribe the designs to me, and my repugnance is lessened, as dedications are quite out of fashion. The way now is only to write the persons' names and titles—luckily I have none of the latter, and therefore the page will be so naked, that I think he had better pick out some young Lord Mæcenas, who will be fond of the compliment. If he insists on me, who had rather pass eldest, something in the manner of the enclosed card is all that is not only necessary, but all that I can admit.

I am not proud of being a favourer of the arts, but it is better than *Illustrissimos* and *Eccellenzas*. It is horrible to owe one's lustre only to an adjective; and I like *nobile Inglese*, because one may be a gentleman without being a lord, as many are lords without being gentlemen: so my humility, you see, is errant pride—yes, yes, we are pitiful creatures, and all impostors; always studying what the world will think of us, though hourly experience shows us how little it does think of us. Who will throw away a moment's reflection on a dedication to *me?* A mighty comfort truly to have the letters of one's name exist in a page that is turned over unread, in a hundred copies of a set of prints! Yet this is a farthing's worth of fame that many men covet! Is there a clown who scratches his initials on the leads of a church, who does not say to himself, *Exegi monumentum ære*

* Expression of Lord Chatham on Lord Clive.
† Daughter of Lord Windsor, and first wife of Lord Beauchamp.

perennius? I laugh at the world, I laugh at myself, and you will laugh at me too for this long monologue: pray do. There is little intrinsic in me but my invariable attachment to you. It has lasted above thirty years, and I do not find that it breaks with age.

I must add a codicil, I find.

Codicil, Feb. 14, 1772.

Wish me joy: I have changed all my Roman medals of great brass, some of which were very fine, particularly a medaliuncino of Alexander Severus, which is unique, far the *uniquest* thing in the world; a silver bell for an inkstand, made by Benvenuto Cellini.* It makes one believe all the extravagant encomiums he bestows on himself: indeed so does his Perseus.† Well, *my* bell is in the finest taste, and is swarmed by caterpillars, lizards, grasshoppers, flies, and masques, that you would take it for one of the plagues of Egypt. They are all *in altissimo*, nay, *in out-issimo relievo*, and yet almost invisible but with a glass. Such foliage, such fruitage! In short, it is fit to keep company with my Eagle and *your* Caligula—can one say more?

LETTER CLXXXIX.

Arlington Street, March 5, 1772.

I do not wonder you are impatient for Danish news, or that you mistake in what you say of their King. Absurd he has been enough; but in the late revolution he was as much a sacrifice as his Queen; and is in effect not less a prisoner. There is not only a dead silence preserved here, but foreign Courts are kept as much in the dark. All I can collect is, that a knot of offended nobility have operated the change, headed by Rantzau, and two others, whose names I forget, and who never quit sight of the King; Rantzau even lying in his room. He signs, is forced to sign, every paper they offer to him, and I suppose is as roundly lectured as Charles II. was by the Kirk in Scotland before the battle of Worcester. The Queen Dowager, besides that she and her son are both fools, is said to be very ambitious; but whether they have real influence or not, I do not know. The poor little Prince Royal, of whose legitimacy there can be no doubt, whatever there is of his sister's, is never mentioned, and I suppose will be set aside as well as his father, when the junto have found, or pretended to find sufficient grounds for deposition: such are the blessed effects of despotism, even to the despots! When no resource

* This beautiful work of art was executed for Pope Clement VII. by this inimitable artist. It is a mass of carving in altissimo-relievo. It had formerly been in the collection of the Marquis Leonati, of Parma, and was purchased by the Marquis of Rockingham, who exchanged it with Horace Walpole for some very scarce coins and medals. At the memorable sale at Strawberry Hill in 1842, it was bought in by the Earl of Waldegrave.—Ed.

† A statue in bronze in the loggia before the old Palace at Florence.

but despair is left, the oppressors make much quicker work than can be done by the help of laws. Fifty grand signors have lost their heads for one Charles I., and he might have kept his, if he had not sultanized.

The Queen of Denmark, I am told, is to be despatched to Norway. I pity *her!* Her youth and inexperience could not suppose that she might not do any thing, when she was told that she might do every thing. How many dismal hours will she have for fruitless reflections! How she will curse those who misled her, far more guilty than those who confine her! They are wise Princes who sacrifice their ministers, that seldom deserve better. Mr. Keith's spirit in behalf of the Queen has been rewarded. The red riband has been sent to him, though there was no vacancy, with orders to put it on directly himself, *as there is no Sovereign in Denmark to invest him with it.*

We have another scene coming to light, of a black dye indeed. The groans of India have mounted to heaven, where *the heaven-born* General Lord Clive will certainly be disavowed. Oh! my dear sir, we have outdone the Spaniards in Peru! They were at least butchers on a religious principle, however diabolical their zeal. We have murdered, deposed, plundered, usurped—nay, what think you of the famine in Bengal, in which three millions perished, being caused by a monopoly of the provisions, by the servants of the East India Company? All this is come out, is coming out—unless the gold that inspired these horrors can quash them. Voltaire says, learning, arts, and philosophy have softened the manners of mankind: when tigers can read they may possibly grow tame—but man!—

What shall I tell you to clear up your brow and make you smile again? Shall it be that Lord Chatham hunts and makes verses? He has written a copy to Garrick, in which he disclaims ambition. Recollect what I have said to you, that *this world is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel!* This is the quintessence of all I have learnt in fifty years! Adieu!

LETTER CXC.

Arlington Street, March 27, 1772.

The Royal Marriage Bill is at last finished, after taking up nearly a hundred hours in the House of Commons. It was near being wrecked at last, being carried but by a majority of eighteen, while ten more, who would have been against it, were accidentally shut out, not expecting a division so soon. This is a mighty tumble from the first day of the session, when the Opposition had given up the game.

Never was a bill that gave more deep offence, and from mere speculation: the people did not interfere; nor was it a matter of popu-

larity to oppose it. Lord Mansfield bears all the odium, and very deservedly, for no man else had a hand in drawing it, as ministers and lawyers declare. Lord North, though disliking the bill supported it like a man; the rest treacherously condemning it, voting for it, and wishing it might miscarry.

Lord North is likely to have the Duke of Saxe-Gotha's vacant garter, the only one, except my father's, that has shone in the House of Commons since Queen Elizabeth's days.

If you want any more news, you must have it from Ireland, where there is a pretty substantial insurrection of four thousand men, calling themselves *Hearts of Steel.* Whatever their hearts are, their heads are of gunpowder. Poor souls! they have had thorough provocation; reduced to starve, to be shot, or to be hanged. They are tenants of Lord Donegal, driven off their lands because they could not pay hard fines for renewing their leases. Sixteen hundred horse and infantry are marched against them. We had better have wasted a hundred hours in redressing these misfortunes, than in framing acts against marriages!

It is confidently said, that the Danish *Hearts of Steel* have assured us that the Queen's life shall not be touched,—and this they reckon a favour. Struensee and Brandt are probably by this time no more.

We had last Sunday a most violent storm of thunder and lightning. The latter entered by the wire of the bell into Lady Mary Fox's dressing-room in Cavendish Square, where she was with her husband, Lord Robert Spenser and young Harry Conway. It melted the wire, fired the cornice, burned a chair, and damaged the floor. I cannot but think it was raised in a hot-house, by order of the Macaronis, who *will* have every thing before the season.

The House of Commons is going to tap the affairs of India, an endless labyrinth! We shall lose the East before we know half its history. It was easier to conquer it, than to know what to do with it. If you or the Pope can tell, pray give us your opinion.

LETTER CXCI.

Arlington Street, April 9, 1772.

It is uncommon for *me* to send *you* news of the Pretender. He has been married at Paris by proxy, to a Princess of Stolberg. All I can learn of her is, that she is niece to a Princess of Salm, whom I knew there, without knowing any more of her. The new Pretendress is said to be but sixteen, and a Lutheran: I doubt the latter; if the former is true, I suppose they mean to carry on the breed in the way it began, by a spurious child. A Fitz-Pretender is an excellent continuation of the patriarchal line. Mr. Chute says, when the Royal Family are prevented from marrying, it is a right time for the

Stuarts to marry. This event seems to explain the Pretender's disappearance last autumn; and though they sent him back from Paris, they may not dislike the propagation of thorns in our side.

I hear the credit of the French Chancellor declines. He had strongly taken up the clergy; and Sœur Louise, the King's Carmelite daughter, was the knot of the intrigue. The new Parliament has dared to remonstrate against a declaration obtained by the Chancellor for setting aside an *arrêt* of 1762, occasioned by the excommunication of Parma. The Spanish and Neapolitan Ministers interposed, and pronounced the declaration an infringement of the family compact; the *arrêt* of 1762 has been confirmed to satisfy them, and the Pope's authority, and every thing that comes from Rome, except what regards *the Pentential*, (I do not know what that means,) restrained. This is supported by D'Aiguillon and all the other Ministers, who are labouring the reconciliation of the Princess of the Blood, that the Chancellor may not have the honour of reconciling them. Perhaps the Princess of Stolberg sprung out of Sister Louise's cell. The King has demanded twelve millions of the clergy; they consent to give ten. We shall see whether Madame Louise, on her knees, or Madame du Barri, will fight the better fight. I should think the King's knees were more of an age for praying, than for fighting.

The House of Commons is embarked on the ocean of Indian affairs, and will probably make a long session. I went thither the other day to hear Charles Fox, contrary to a resolution I had made of never setting my foot there again. It is strange how disuse makes one awkward; I felt a palpitation, as if I were going to speak there myself. The object answered: Fox's abilities are amazing at so very early a period, especially under the circumstances of such a dissolute life. He was just arrived from Newmarket, had sat up drinking all night, and had not been in bed. How such talents make one laugh at Tully's rules for an orator, and his indefatigable application. His laboured orations are puerile in comparison of this boy's manly reason. We beat Rome in eloquence and extravagance; and Spain in avarice and cruelty; and, like both, we shall only serve to terrify schoolboys, and for lessons of mortality! "Here stood St. Stephen's Chapel; here young Catiline spoke; here was Lord Clive's diamond-house; this is Leadenhall Street, and this broken column was part of the palace of a company of merchants who were sovereigns of Bengal! They starved millions in India by monopolies and plunder, and almost raised a famine at home by the luxury occasioned by their opulence, and by that opulence raising the price of every thing, till the poor could not purchase bread!" Conquest, usurpation, wealth, luxury, famine—one knows how little farther the genealogy has to go! If you like it better in Scripture-phrase, here it is: Lord Chatham begot the East-India Company; the East-India Company begot Lord Clive; Lord Clive begot the Maccaronis, and they begot poverty; and all the race are still living; just as Clodius was born before the death of Julius Cæsar. There is nothing more like than

two ages that are very like; which is all that Rousseau means by saying, "give him an account of any great metropolis, and he will foretell its fate." Adieu!

LETTER CXCII.

Arlington Street, April 21, 1772.

We have little news. Every body is gone out of town, or to Newmarket, for the Easter holidays. The Parliament will sit late on Indian affairs. There is a select committee appointed to examine into those grievances; but I expect nothing from it. People will be very eager and very important at first. The criminals will puzzle and weary them; the idle grow tired with the discussion; and the persevering will probably be bribed to drop or perplex the pursuit. Should you wonder if the most guilty, who are the most rich, should obtain a verdict of applause?

We have a strong fleet preparing, that has a formidable appearance. The world destines it against Copenhagen. I hope it will not sail. I believe a Prussian army would soon sail by land to Hanover, without waiting for a wind. We conclude Struensee* and

* Count Struensee was the son of a German divine of some eminence, who among other preferments was Professor of Theology at Halle in Saxony. His mother also was descended from a respectable family. They were both persons of the most simple and fervent piety. The Count was born August 5, 1737; he was educated first in the celebrated Orphan house of Dr. Franke, and subsequently at the University of Halle, where he devoted his mind to the study of physic, and where he is supposed to have first imbibed from his companions those infidel opinions which distinguished him through life. He afterwards settled at Altona. By what means he was first introduced to Christian VII., King of Denmark, does not appear, but in 1768 we find him raised to the rank of Physician to his Majesty, and appointed to attend him during his tour through some of the Courts of Europe. Struensee accordingly accompanied the King on his travels, and while at Paris formed an intimate friendship and connexion with Brandt, a Dane of good family, and the subsequent associate of his crimes and of their punishment. During his stay in France, Struensee had insinuated himself into the good graces of the King; and soon after his return he was raised to the rank of a Privy-Counsellor, and presented to the Queen, with whom he soon became as great a favourite as with her husband. Brandt, who had been for some time disgraced, was recalled from Paris, and reinstated in his office at Court through the intervention of Struensee, and they were both shortly afterwards raised to the rank of Count. The attachment of the Queen to Struensee exceeded, in appearance us least, the bounds of all moderation, but nothing criminal has ever been proved. Had Struensee confined himself to politics, he might perhaps have escaped the weight of general indignation which at last overwhelmed him. His abilities were commanding, his powers of application great, his views enlarged, his resolutions rapidly carried into effect. Profligacy was the rock upon which Count Struensee split. Masked balls and other foreign amusements were about this time first introduced into the Danish court. Of these amusements Struensee was the indefatigable leader. At the conclusion of one of these festive occasions, given at the royal palace on 15th Jan., 1772, Roller Banner, after the company had retired, entered the bed-chamber of the King, and informed him that there was a conspiracy against his person and dignity, at the head of which were his wife, Count Struensee, and their associates. He urged the King to sign an order for their immediate arrest. This, however, the King steadily refused. The Queen Dowager and Prince Frederic were then called in to enforce the requisition, and at last by positive

Brandt executed, and things seem to look but ill for the young Queen herself. There have been flying reports that she is dead, and to-day the papers say she is recovered of two fits of the colic—the colic sounds like a very political illness. It is certain that Baron Dieden, the Danish Minister, behaved with great insolence to the King the other day at the levée, laughing indecently to the Prussian Minister on the King's not speaking to him. His wife is just arrived, but has not been at Court, nor is visited by the great ladies. All this looks serious.

The Pretender is certainly married to the Princess of Stolberg, whose youngest sister is the wife of the Marquis de la Jamaique, son of the Duke of Berwick; but I do not believe she is a Protestant, though I have heard from one who should know, General Redmond, an Irish officer in the French service, that the Pretender himself abjured the Roman Catholic religion at Liege a few years ago; and that, on that account, the Irish Catholics no longer make him remittances. This would be some, and the only apology, but fear, for the Pope's refusing him the title of King. What say you to his Protestantism? At Paris they call his income twenty-five thousand pounds sterling a-year. His bride has nothing, but many quarters. The Cardinal of York's answer last year to the question of *whither his brother was gone?* is now explained: you told me he replied, *Whither he should have gone a year sooner.*

I am just going to the Opera to hear Milico, who sings to-night for the first time. I do not believe he will draw such audiences as Mademoiselle Heinel has done. The town has an idle notion that she made so much impression on a very high heart, that it is thought prudent to keep it out of her way. She is the most graceful figure in the world; with charming eyes, bewitching mouth, and lovely countenance; yet I do not think we shall see a Dame du Barri on this side the Channel. Adieu!

P.S. I know Mr. Nichols,* and have a great regard for him. Pray tell him so, and show him so.

threats obtained his reluctant signature. Not a moment was lost: Roller Banner went immediately to the chamber of Struensee, forced open the door, and found him asleep in his bed. The Count made no resistance. Count Brandt having made some show of resistance was at last compelled to surrender. Early the next morning the Queen was hurried away to Cronsburg, a fortress about twenty-four miles from Copenhagen. 'Tis an extraordinary fact, that had Struensee, according to his usual custom, gone to his apartments before the ball, he would have there found Count Rantzau, who was prepared to acquaint him with the whole conspiracy. Business, however, detained him till very late, and he went straight to the ball. Struensee was confined in a dark dungeon, chained to the floor. The popular animosity towards him was so extreme, that the commissioners were obliged to take his examinations within the citadel, with the bridges drawn up to prevent outrage. After more than two months examination, the commissioners passed sentence of death, forfeiture of estate, and degradation from their rank upon the two Counts. The King signed the sentence. The unfortunate criminals behaved with great intrepidity, and were publicly executed three days after the sentence was passed, surrounded by great bodies of troops.

* A correspondent of Mr. Gray. See Mason's edition of Gray's Works.

LETTER CXCIII.

Arlington Street, May 13, 1772.

We have nothing new, but what is no longer so, the Danish tragedy. It was on the point of being a very deep one. Had our fleet sailed, the north had been in arms. Luckily it did its business without stirring out of port. The Queen goes to Zell. Struensee is gone to David Rizzio!

May 14th.

I hear to-day that the destination is changed, and that the Danish Queen does not go to Zell, but to Goerde, a hunting-seat near Hanover. The yacht to convey her is to hoist the Danish flag as soon as she goes on board. I have heard from good authority too, that her husband has twice endeavoured to get to her. I do not wonder we maintain her royalty, for by what code can a divorce pass on a legal marriage without the consent of either party? Even your match-making and match-dissolving operator at Rome would not allow of such a sentence. Adieu!

LETTER CXCIV.

Arlington Street, June 15, 1772.

Have not you felt very hot to-day: are not you a little fatigued? or have you no sympathy? While one Sir Horace Mann has been overwhelmed with ceremonies, was the other quite at his ease and insensible? In short, you have been installed to-day; and your representative is actually at this moment doing part of your honours to all the remaining town, at a magnificent ball that you and the knights your companions are giving at the Opera House. New Sir Horace has been quite kind to me, and pressed me to accept as many tickets as I pleased: but I could not bring myself to go into such a formal crowd in this warm weather, for it is the first summer we have had for years, and so I only took two tickets for younger performers. Pray, one Sir Horace, write very cordially to the other Sir Horace, for he has really done every thing with the best grace in the world.

On Thursday there is to be a higher chapter, and Lord North is to receive the Garter.

Colonel Heywood* has sent me word of the box that is coming, so I conclude it will be taken care of.

The papers have told you what is indeed now very public, that the Duke of Gloucester, the very evening of his return, allowed my

* Groom of the Bed-chamber to the Duke of Gloucester.

niece to acquaint her father that they have been married ever since September 1766. Lady Waldegrave does not take the royal title immediately, which I think very modest, but her father has shown the letter so much, that even copies of it have got about. For my own part, I have not at all changed my sentiments from the event, but still think her prudence to have been perfect. It is a great satisfaction that her character is invulnerable: and it gives me much more pleasure that she has preserved the honour she had, than that she has obtained this great honour, which does not dazzle me at all.

As the Parliament is risen, and every body gone or going out of town, you cannot expect news. It is a kind of vacation that my letters are forced to observe. Your friend Lord Cowper has done a noble act: he has given a pension of two hundred pounds a-year to an old friend of his aunt, Lady Frances Elliot, who had left her but a bare thousand pounds: you cannot imagine how I admire him for it. Generosity is not the extravagance in fashion. Adieu! my dear sir.

LETTER CXCV.

Strawberry Hill, July 1, 1772.

It is true, you had forgot the list of maps, but I have received them in your postscript to-day, and as I shall be in London to-morrow, I will give my book-seller orders about them.

Will you believe, in Italy, that one rascally and extravagant banker had brought Britannia, Queen of the Indies, to the precipice of bankruptcy! It is very true, and Fordyce is the name of the caitiff. He has broke half the bankers, and was very willing to have added our friend Mr. Croft to the list; but he begged to be excused lending him a farthing. He went on the same errand to an old quaker; who said, "Friend *Fordyce*, I have known several persons ruined by *two dice;* but I will not be ruined by *Four dice.*"

As the fellow is a Scotchman, and as the Scots have given provocation even to the Bank of England, by circulating vast quantities of their own bank's notes, all the clamour against that country is revived, and the war is carried very far, at least in the newspapers. This uproar has given spirits too, to the popular party in the City, who are recovering some of the ground they had lost, and will beat the Court in the election of sheriffs, which I think was to be decided this morning: but, to say the truth, I know little of either of this matter, or of the history of the bankers. Nay, I am not more *au fait* of Poland, where, they say, their Imperial Russian, and Prussian Majesties are going to make the royalty hereditary in the present King's person and family, by dividing his dominions amongst themselves. It is very kind, for as his relations were never born to crowns, they might, no more than he, know how to wear a very heavy one. But what do you say to the affronts offered to France, where this partition-

treaty was not even notified? How that formidable monarchy is fallen, debased! It gives *us* brave time for playing the fool.

And so all the Pope's subterfuges cannot save the Jesuits! Methinks I wish the King of Spain would insist on *our* dismissing our black militia too. The peace between the Russians and Turks seems to be made, but I have never thought of that war, since I found that Constantinople was not to be taken. You know I do not love peddling politics. Nothing but a vast revolution could revive my taste for them. Indeed, Denmark is pretty well: Poland pretty well,—but can one care whether some thousand acres of Tartary, more or less, belong to the Grand Signior or the Czarina? Good night.

3rd.

Four more bankers are broken; and two men ruined by these failures (which are computed to amount to four millions,) shot themselves the day before yesterday! It is now thought that Fordyce only advanced the crash, and that it would have happened without his interference, for the Scotch bankers have been pursuing so deep a game by remitting bills and drawing cash from hence, that the Bank of England has been alarmed, and was not sorry to seize this opportunity of putting an end to so pernicious a traffic. In short, it has given a great shock to credit, and it will require some time to re-establish it.

LETTER CXCVI.

Strawberry Hill, July 23, 1772.

I OUGHT, I know, to have acknowledged sooner a letter of yours with very particular and kind advice, but I have waited to tell you that I had received the Cassolette of Benvenuto Cellini, and in hopes of having something to fill a letter; but Benvenuto is still performing quarantine, and nothing has happened worth repeating; so, lest the delay should make you apprehend for the safety of your letter, I will no longer neglect to thank you for it, though I can no farther follow your advice than to be entirely a cypher in the affair. The part I have acted was dictated by the most scrupulous honour; I cannot repent it; I will not offer to atone for it. I may be hated, but I will not deserve to be despised. Honours I never sought, money I never valued; and if I did, I have what to my moderate wishes will always seem riches; and, what is more than all, I am fifty-five; is that an age to care for favour, or fear frowns?

We have had the only perfect summer I ever remember; hot, fine, and still very warm, without a drop of rain. Our verdure suffers, and so do the poor cows, but I have fretted over so many deluges, that I cannot help enjoying these halcyon days. They are indeed in all senses, halcyon. Not a cloud even in the political sky, except

a caprice of Lord Hilsborough, who is to quit his American Seals, because he will not reconcile himself to a plan of settlement on the Ohio, which all the world approves; but I should think this exit will terminate in a single alteration, and that Lord Weymouth will return to the Cabinet.

I am going for a fortnight or three weeks into Yorkshire, and hope by my return to find your positive directions about the maps, and Benvenuto in Arlington Street.

LETTER CXCVII.

Arlington Street, August 3, 1772.

Can I help writing to you, my dear sir, though I wrote but the other day? Benvenuto Cellini is this moment arrived, but so fine, so beautiful, so Raffaelesque, that I am charmed and ashamed; all gratitude and confusion. Is this what you called an old battered *meuble?* It is in perfect preservation, and every god and goddess as celestial as if just dropped from Heaven. You are too good and too magnificent: all I can do is to dedicate your offering in the chapel at Strawberry, which, by the way, is full of your presents. Your Caligula, your Castiglione, your Bianca Capello, your, &c. &c. I wonder I have not a red face with blushing.

I chanced to be in town to-day, as I set out to-morrow to make a visit to Lord Strafford in Yorkshire, a very old friend too; for my old friends must give me great provocation before I change.

The most ancient of our acquaintance is dead at last, the Princess Craon. She has been sitting ready-dressed for death for some years. I mean, she was always full-dressed, and did nothing, nor saw any body; but now and then one of her old children or grand-children.

The crack in credit is not stopped; two more persons broke last week; the lesser for two hundred and forty thousand pounds. There are some great Scotch lords in violent danger of becoming *de très petits seigneurs.*

In Denmark there seems to be another scene to come. Rantzau, the active and ostensible chief of the Revolution, is sent away with a pension. The principal governors are not known, which implies insecurity, unless, as I believe, the Prussian is the soul of the conspiracy. The Queen enjoys herself in Hanover: her sister of Brunswick has made her a visit. Shall you wonder if the Queen reappears in Copenhagen?

We have had and have the *summerest* summer that I have known these hundred years. We had really begun to fancy that some comet had brushed us a little out of the sun's way.

Once more accept my thanks: I never can give you enough, and yet I can never be more than I always have been, yours most affectionately.

LETTER CXCVIII.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 29, 1772.

How can you speak so slightingly of the fine chest of Benvenuto? It is most beautiful, and fitted up in the prettiest manner; nor do I at all perceive ill usage in it. Mr. Chute, who is here, is delighted with it; and the more, in that the top is copied from a most scarce print after Raphael, by Marc Antonio, which Stosch procured for him, and which is different from three others. The chest is deposited in a new glazed closet in a sumptuous state bed-chamber, which was finished but to-day, and which completes my house. It must terminate it, for I have at last exhausted all my hoards and collections: and such a quantity of things were scarce ever amassed together!

It has been said in our newspapers, that the Cardinal of York was dead; but your silence makes me conclude it is not true, which is probable too by its being in our papers, for they are absolutely nothing but magazines of lies, blunders, scandal, virulence and absurdity. Of true news we have none at all at present. This very brief epistle must, therefore, set out, ill provided as it is. Wars in Poland are out of our reach, and the Turkish war or peace is like a Chancery suit, of which one just hears once in a term, and then it goes to sleep again. Common, small events, like fine ornaments at a great height, will not do for so great a distance as we stand at.

LETTER CXCIX.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 20, 1772.

THERE is an end of palliating, suppressing, or disbelieving: the marriage, my niece's marriage, is formally notified to the King by the Duke of Gloucester. Many symptoms had convinced me of late that so it would be. Last Wednesday night I received a letter signed *Maria Gloucester*, acquainting me that the declaration has been made, and been received by his Majesty with grief, tenderness, and justice. I say justice, *tout oncle* as I am, for it would have been very unjust to the Duke of Cumberland to have made any other distinction between two brothers equally in fault, than what affection without overt acts cannot help making. This implies that the Duke of Gloucester must undergo the same prohibition as his brother did, which I am told is to be the case, though the step is not yet taken.

Having acted so rigorously while I could have any doubt of any sort left, it was but decent now to show that respect, nay gratitude, for so great an honour done to the family, which was due to the Prince and still more to his honour and justice. I accordingly begged the

Duchess to ask leave for me to kiss his Royal Highness's hand, which was immediately granted. I went directly to the Pavilions at Hampton Court, where they were, and the Duke received me with great goodness, even drawing an arm-chair for me himself when I refused to continue sitting by the Duchess, or even to sit at all. He entered into the detail of his reasons for declaring the marriage, which he knew, by a former letter to the Duchess, I had approved their not publishing so far as her taking the title; and by something that dropped apropos to the title, I am persuaded that my having obstinately avoided all connexion with him, had been a principal cause of his anger, though I do not doubt but some who were averse to the marriage had said every thing they could to the disadvantage of the family; and as I had shown most disapprobation of the connexion, impressions against me naturally took the easiest root. Well! here ends my part of this history; I neither shall be, nor seek to be, a favourite, and as little a counsellor. Were I to advise, it should be to submit themselves entirely to the King. A Prince of the Blood, especially of a character so esteemed, may give great trouble, but whom do they hurt but their own family? The Duke of Cumberland was slighted by the Opposition, because he married the sister of the man in England the most obnoxious to them. To them the Duke of Gloucester is a very different case, and they not likely not to make the distinction; but I shall think the Duchess very ill-advised, if she does not dissuade every thing that can displease the King. Her temper is warm, but she has an admirable understanding and a thousand virtues.

We have an instance in our family of real dignity of mind, and I set it down as the most honourable alliance in the pedigree. The Dowager Lady Walpole,* you know, was a French staymaker's daughter. When Ambassadress in France, the Queen expressed surprise at her speaking so good French. Lady Walpole said she was a French woman. "Grançaise!" replied the Queen. "Vous Française, Madame! et de quelle famille?"—"D'auccune, Madame," answered my aunt. Don't you think that *aucune* sounded greater than Montmorency would have done? One must have a great soul to be of the *aucune* family, which is not necessary, to be a Howard.

Don't trouble yourself any more about the head of Stephens; I have got one here. I will subscribe for any thing of Mr. Patch's, but have very little taste for those gates; though the originals are fine. Jesse's seem to me still less agreeable. Zoffani is delightful in his real way, and introduces the furniture of a room with great propriety; but his talent is neither for rooms simply, nor portraits. He makes wretched pictures when he is serious. His talent is, to draw scenes in comedy, and there he beats the Flemish painters in their own way of detail. Butler, the author of Hudibras, might as well be employed to describe a solemn funeral, in which there was nothing ridiculous. This,† however, is better than his going to draw naked savages, and be scalped,

* Mary Magdalan Lombard, wife of Horatio, first Lord Walpole, and brother of Sir Robert Walpole.

† Zoffani went to Florence to paint a view of the Tribune.

with that wild man Banks,* who is poaching in every ocean for the fry of little islands that escaped the drag-net of Spain.

So they do not think at Rome that the Pretender is worthy to have his face engraved! And yet they wonder the King of Spain is not a bigot, when even the Pope himself does not pretend to be so. It is well for the world when there is a grain of honesty amongst the great umpires of the earth. The King of Sweden is not quite so frank; he is taking oaths on the Bible that he means to keep the oath he is breaking! Truly, between him and the nobility, I am very neutral. Nobility harassed Poland, till they see it parcelled out as if a company of brokers had bought it at an auction; the brokers would have paid the purchase-money; three or four righteous Sovereigns are above such mechanic dealings! Oh! by how much is the only rational being† in the world, the worst! Pious Maria Theresa! Humane Joseph, the father and the idol of his people! Catherine, the legislatress! Well, I vow I think Frederick of Prussia, who never pretended to a single virtue, is the best of the set. He never had the impudence to deny that there is nothing he would not do. He quarters Poland, deposes the Queen of Denmark, inspires the nobility to enslave their King, and prompts the King of Sweden to enslave nobility and people; and yet one must say for him that he does not go to church, and invite God to be of the plot. A highwayman is an honest fellow compared to a priest who poisons you in the Sacrament. Bless us! bless us! who would not tremble to have power!

LETTER CC.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 4, 1772.

It is so very long since I heard a word from you, my dear sir, that I can almost fancy you have been laid up with the gout, as I have been. Yes, to-day commences the sixth week of my confinement, close confinement, almost to my bed, and strictly to my bedchamber. I have had this terrible illness in every limb and every joint; and it is but to-day that I can say every symptom is mending; but how the comfort of recovery is abated by the reflection on the returns I must expect of the same complaint! To what satisfaction can one look forward, when one sees the gout peeping over happiness's shoulder, and threatening one with being of the party? This thought puts an end to all views; I resign myself to age and its proper nurse, retirement; and only propose to be so reasonable as neither to wish to live or die.

Being in a perfect solitude here, and incapable, from weakness and languor, to see even my friends, you may conceive I can have nothing to tell you. The papers, my only informers, will have given

* Sir Joseph Banks. † Man.

you the whole history of Wilkes, of which I know not one tittle more. He was on the point of being Lord Mayor; and it would have been a phenomenon!

I have been told, I know not how truly, that there has been a revolution not only in the Czarina's Cabinet, but bed-chamber; and that while her favourite Orloff was making and breaking the peace with the Turks, a new Adonis or Hercules has supplanted him at St. Petersburgh. I have an opinion, that when violent systems once begin to be deranged, they do not last long; the present scene in the north is throughout so violent and unjust, that no reflecting being can be sorry for any catastrophe that befals any of the principal actors.

The iniquities of our East India Company and its crew of monsters seem to be drawing towards a conclusion, at least to be falling on their own heads. They have involved themselves in such difficulties, that the Parliament is forced to meet earlier than was intended, in order to assist or correct them. Tisiphone, Alecto, and Megæra should correct them!

Are Lord Huntingdon and Mr. Nichols still at Florence? You never say a word to me of the latter, who I thought likely to please you. Consider, we have not so many people left that we both know, that you need be sparing of naming those we can talk about. I am often going to ask you what remains there are of my Florentine acquaintance; but you never indulge my curiosity that way, though it would amuse me. Well.—Adieu!

LETTER CCL

Arlington Street, Dec. 22, 1772.

Upon my honour I will pack up my house at Strawberry Hill, and send it you, if you send me any more presents. Why, it is full of them, and belongs more to you than to me. Have you no mercy? Do you take me for an East Indian Governor, that you give me *lacks* of precious things, and suppose I have no conscience. Consider how ill I have been, and that upon a sick bed at least one begins to have scruples. I could not look round me, without hearing a qualm whisper, *Restitution!* I cannot carry all your curiosities along with me, and to leave them behind will but add to my regrets. Well! but I will not die though, till I have seen Donatello.* After eleven weeks of suffering, I am come to town, and though rid of pain, cannot stir; consequently want amusement: Donatello will be a new plaything for an old child. Verily, I put myself in mind of Gay's sick fox, who after preaching to his young kin against *pullicide*, cries,

* A bas-relief of St. John by Donatello, which was placed in the chapel of Strawberry Hill.

But, bark! I hear a hen that clocks:
Go—but be moderate in your food—
A chicken, too, might do *me* good.

I am sorry to hear you know more of the gout than by what you have seen in your own family, and from my relation. The muscular pain in your breast came from cold that mixed with your disorder; I had it so violently for twenty-four hours, that I could only sit up double in bed. Three spoonsful of Sir Walter Raleigh's cordial, known by the learned name of *Confectio Raleana*, took it entirely away, and a coughing with it, that exhausted me more than my gout, in this very fit. Why will you not have the bootikins? Not that I think the gout in your feet, when it begins so late, will do you any thing but good, and prolong your life. What physician have you had since poor Cocchi? Not that I think any physician will do you more good than the gout will do you harm. The consolation in this terrible disorder is, that it does not want a physician; and, if it did!

I am sorry you saw no more of Mrs. Pitt.* She is the most amiable of beings, and the most to be pitied; her brutal half-mad husband, with whom she is still not out of love, and who has heaped on her every possible cruelty and provoking outrage, will not suffer her to see, or even hear from, one of her children. Of Lady Ligonier† she has heard too much. Then, all her beauties and good-nature are poisoned by deafness and danger of blindness. I cannot profess, ungrateful as I am, equal admiration for the other lady,‡ *my ingenious friend*, as you call her; a title I did not even know I was honoured with, and which I believe was assumed solely to make court to you. I will not call them pretensions, for there is a mixture of humility, but I own I think there is little more in that Dame than an ambition of having pretensions. What do you think of physicians, when they prescribe the air of Rome?

We have no public news, but new horrors coming out every day against our East-India Company and their servants. The latter laid a tax on our Indian subjects, without the knowledge of the former. One article was twenty-four thousand pounds a-year—yes—to Mr. Sykes for his table—yes,—yes,—and this appeared at the bar of the House of Commons from a witness he brought thither himself—*ex uno disce omnes*. Poor Indians! I fear they will be *disaffected*. Would you believe, I read that epithet the other day in a Portuguese relation of a meeting among their negroes in the Brazils. Hacked, hewed, lamed, maimed, tortured, worked to death, poor Africans do not *love* their masters! Oh, Tyranny, thy name should henceforth be Impudence! I am sick of all northern profligacy, of the Czarina's murders or amours; nor care whether she poisons

* Penelope, only sister of Richard Atkins, and wife of George Pitt, afterwards Lord Rivers. She is mentioned in Mr. Walpole's Epistle to Eckadt, the painter, on the Beauties.

† Eldest daughter of George Pitt, divorced for adultery.

‡ Mrs. Ann Pitt, sister of Lord Chatham, and Privy Purse to Augusta, Princess of Wales.

Emperors or enriches her discarded lovers with provinces. I pity the Duchess of Parma, who is not allowed to choose her own little creatures; and yet I forgive the King of Spain for persisting in rooting out the Jesuits, though he does not know why. A whirlwind brushes the air and clears it. I do not know whether the honours of Mantua will console Lord H.* for those he idly forfeited here.

My niece of Gloucester's pregnancy has been declared here. I am as little clear whether that will be of any advantage to her.

The Prince of Condé has made his peace. The Duke of Orleans is supposed to have a hankering the same way, but is retained by his son. The Chancellor and d'Aiguillon are sworn foes; the mistress omnipotent. Some truth there was, I am assured by a person just returned from France, in the Prince of Conti's story. M. de Sartine, Lieutenant de Police, went with his officers to the Temple to search for libels: the Prince immediately stripped stark, and showed he had not a rag of paper about him. He told M. de Sartine that, knowing *him* for a man of honour, he would dispense with his stripping; he believed the other gentlemen were also men of honour, but not being acquainted with them, and having heard of officers of justice, who, being sent to houses of obnoxious persons to search for libels, has contrived to find libels which they had brought with them on purpose, he insisted on their stripping to the skin likewise, and when they had done so, he bade them go and search wherever they pleased. For my part, I did not expect so much cleverness from his Highness.

Adieu! my dear Signor *Donat*ello! It is a title I am sure you have purchased dearly. I shall grow afraid of Danaos et *Donat*ferentes: and the more you give me, the less I will be, yours ever.

P.S. I think I have received but one of the two letters you mention. I hope your new commissioner will be regular; but I must not complain when it is three months since I wrote myself. I never was so guilty—but the gout!

LETTER CCII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 21, 1773.

I WISH I had received your last a few days sooner, as it would have told you I was mending, though slowly, and had begun to take the air. It would have saved your hearing I have a little relapsed, and by the time you receive this I shall probably be airing again. I do not expect much more yet awhile: four months, which ended yesterday, shatter such a frame as mine dreadfully; a codicil of ten or twelve days throw it back a vast way. The gout is returned into both feet, and a little into one elbow: I could rise neither yesterday nor to-day; but I flatter myself it is already going off, and will carry

* Francis Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon, Groom of the Stole to George III., from which he was dismissed.

away these dregs which have set up for themselves. This is very well for the present; but what a prospect, if distemper, as they say prolongs life, instead of shortening it! Your specimen, I trust, will have that effect, and that great torture is not a necessary ingredient of living.

To the latter part of my imprisonment I am very well reconciled: I have had a great deal of company. Five young ladies, the finest and youngest, have made it the fashion to visit me: and, as old ladies never fail to go after the young, I have wanted neither sort, so that I have had a constant circle, without living in a crowd, as every body else does. It suits my age, and the gravity I ought to have by this time, but which my spirits resist, as they have done my illness.

The people that sit at home hear all current news, true or false: I have none to tell you. The Parliament has nothing to do, or does nothing, for want of an Opposition; as if Ministers acted out of contradiction, like their antagonists. There are, indeed, bankruptcies, that shake almost our foundations; there is an eastern empire to be settled, governed, or held *in commendam;* and there is a little war, and not a little tyranny, at St. Vincent's; but none of them will give the Parliament a quarter of the trouble that a turnpike bill has often done. A few bankrupts have hanged themselves; we, I doubt, shall have hanged many poor Carribbees; and we shall *not* hang the East India Company and their servants, who *richly* deserve it. So will end the lesson of this year, though it is but just begun.

Your brother knight and Minister, Sir James Gray, is dead. He had a stroke of an apoplexy at Court, was carried home, and died the next morning. You may see I want news, when I acquaint you with what the newspapers told you a fortnight ago. It is time to finish, lest I should inform you of some event in last year's Historical Register.

LETTER CCIII.

Arlington Street, Feb. 17, 1773.

Mr. Patch brought me last week, with his brother's engravings, the beautiful St. John of Donatello, and its as lovely and graceful pedestal. My dear sir, how I thank you! and how pleasing is your remembrance of me! but you must send me no more. I not only cannot accept more presents from you, but it would be heaping them on my tomb. My health is gone; pain is my lot; and what are the fair things of this world to me any longer? I leave off making purchases, and put a stop to my collection: it were the hoarding of a miser to pile my house with curiosities, when I shall enjoy them so little; and extravagance to buy when my lease of life is running out very fast. It will be five months to-morrow that I have been a close and anguished prisoner: besides several relapses, a great cold has

added a rheumatism in one side of my face; and when I shall be quit of my actual sufferings, what a shattered tenement will remain? How refit it before I am called upon to sustain another storm?

If I change this subject from my own person, I must not go out of the family: I have a melancholy tale to tell you of another branch of it, my Lord Orford. He had a cutaneous eruption. By advice of his *groom*, he rubbed his body all over with an ointment of sulphur and hellebore. This poison struck in the disease. By as bad advice as his groom's, I mean his own, he took a violent antimonial medicine, which sweated him immoderately; and then he came to town, went to Court, took James's pills, without telling him of the quack drops, sat up late, and though ordered by James to keep at home, returned into the country the next day. The cold struck all his nostrums and ails into his head, and the consequence is—insanity! To complete the misfortune, he is in a public inn, on the great road to Newmarket and Norfolk. His mother, the only proper directress, is in Italy; I am in the state of pain and weakness you know; and my brother has so long shut himself up in his own house, that no consideration could draw him out of it. I need but tell you, that his daughter, the Duchess, even in summer could not prevail on him to wait on the Duke. It is an additional distress, that Lord Orford has for so many years dropped all connexion, all decency, with both my brother and me, that nothing but tenderness for his lamentable position could bear us out in assuming the least authority in what regards him. We have the precaution, however, not to take a single step but at the request of his physicians, or with the advice and approbation of his own most particular friends. His life, we are assured, is safe, and we have hopes given us of the recovery of his reason. His death would be the completion of the family's ruin: his continuance as he is, dreadful to himself and his friends: his total recovery liable to dismal moments for his own mind. His case is a heavy addition to my sufferings, and the anxiety I am under on every step I take in concert with my brother, lest, one way or other, we should be censured, cannot accelerate my recovery.

Let me turn, for your sake, from this gloomy scene to a little episode of politics. What do you think has been the first event of this halcyon or soporific session, in which the Opposition had fairly retreated, confessing their impotence? Why, the first event of this calm was the shipwreck of the Prime Minister. Lord North was yesterday se'nnight beaten by one hundred and fifty-four to forty-five, and on a question of Revenue. Oh! so you suppose the Opposition was lying in ambush at Knights-bridge, and attacked and defeated him by surprise. Well! you are totally mistaken in every part of your conjecture. The Opposition may be still at Knights-bridge, for aught I know; or, if on the field of battle, had no more share in the honour of the day than you or I. A friend made the fatal motion, a friend espoused it, friends supported and carried it. The outward and visible lines of this interlude were these: Lord Howe presented to the House of Commons a petition from the naval captains on half-

pay for increase of allowance. Lord North had thought of taking no part, and had spoken to nobody against it; for, indeed, when all are on his side, how could he suspect that nobody would be with him? Sir Gilbert Elliot backed the petition; Lord North resisted; the consequence I have told you. The next day Lord North, angry with good reason, was on the point of making the affair very serious, and was with difficulty kept from resigning. The world is large in its comments on this mystery, and somehow or other the commentators do not in general impute very pure motives to Sir Gilbert, though some make his conduct personal, others more cabalistic. I am no expounder of unrevealed revelations.

Yesterday the fortune of war was changed, and Lord North triumphed. It was on the affair of St. Vincent's, for the expedition to which Administration was called to account. Caribs, black Caribs have no representatives in Parliament; they have no agent but God, and he is seldom called to the bar of the House to defend their cause; two hundred and six to eighty-eight gave them up to the mercy of their persecutors; and as the Portuguese call *their* negroes, the Caribs are deemed *disaffected*. Alas! dare I complain of gout and rheumatism, when so much a bitterer cup is brewed for men as good as myself in every quarter of the globe! Can one be a man and not shudder at all our nature is capable of! I welcome pain: for it gives me sensibility, and punishes my pride. Adieu!

LETTER CCIV.

Arlington Street, March 12, 1773.

I WAS a brute to forget desiring you in my last to thank Mr. Patch for his dedication of Fra. Bartolomeo. Sure the gout had fallen upon my memory! Pray, tell him it is very lame. His prints both from the Fratre and from Giotto are very well executed; but the former does not strike me like Masaccio. I used to admire his works equal to Raphael's; but certainly it must have been from the colouring, not, as I thought, from his great ideas, for they are far inferior to those of his two contemporaries.

I am very sorry you feel like me, as well as sympathize with me: I hope your fit will neither be so sharp nor so long. I am just got out after two-and-twenty weeks; think of two-and-twenty weeks! And for walking, I might as well stay at home; but I force myself, lest I should take root in my chair.

They tell us the new Queen of Sardinia is another Elizabeth Farnese. France is making a new family-compact with that Court. The Comte d'Artois marries his sister of Provence's sister, and his sister Madame is to be Duchesse de Savoie.

Alack! All their Alps will be of no use in the north. French letters say troops are going from Dunkirk to Sweden, and that English

men-of-war are to convey them. No soul tells us a syllable of this here: yet methinks the King of Prussia believes so, for he has marched an army to the Lippe, which they say is very much in the way to Hanover.

You tell me how dear you pay at your theatres. I will tell you how cheap we buy pictures. Sir Watkin Williams gave six hundred and fifty pounds last week for a landscape of Nicolo Poussin; and Lord Chesterfield four hundred guineas for another, which somebody was so good as to paint a few months ago for Claude Lorraine. Books, prints, coins, do not lose their rank in proportion. I am every day tempted to make an auction; what do you think all your presents would sell for? They would make me a Crœsus, but I think them invaluable.

The physicians have fancied my poor nephew cured; but yesterday he wrote a letter that proved the very reverse. For my own part I am of the desponding side. It would not be proper for *me* to write to his mother; but I think, if she is at Florence, you might from yourself break a hint of his situation to her. I am grieved that she is not in England.

We have none but Indian politics. The Government is to lend the Company fourteen hundred thousand pounds, and to have great share in the direction. I am one that believe the Indies will leave us stranded, as the South Sea did.

A winter without politics is errant summer; and accordingly my letters are forced to be laconic. The fund, you know, is inexhaustible, but I cannot supply you with current cash. Even our Maccaronis entertain the town with nothing but new dresses and the size of their nosegays. They have lost all their money and exhausted their credit, and can no longer game for twenty thousand pounds a-night. Every thing degenerates. Adieu!

P.S. I saw last night at the Duchess of Gloucester's a Lady Hesketh, who asked most kindly after you, and desired me to mention her to you.

LETTER CCV.

Arlington Street, April 27, 1773.

Last post carried you a war between us and France: this mail will bring you peace again. Guicciardini himself would have difficulty to make a long history of such a transaction. Last Wednesday, fifteen ships of the line were ordered to be equipped for the Mediterranean, for a French fleet was sailing thither from Toulon, and a Spanish one was ready at Carthagena, and the Russian squadron was their object. We were to devour both the former, as soon as they had swallowed the latter. Sir Charles Saunders who loves no dish like a French ship, was begged to fall to; and the Stocks, who

are subject to a panic, fell away to a skeleton: but France, ten times more afraid still of our *puissance*, has begged the Stocks to pluck up their spirits, and swears upon her honour not a ship of hers shall sail. Ours, being so formidable, will, I suppose be towed over land to Warsaw, and restore the Polish Constitution and their King to his full rights—how frightened the King of Prussia must be!

The House of Commons, I assure you, has no share in scattering these terrors. Its thunders are a joke, and even affect to joke in their turn, instead of menacing. There was to be a call of the House yesterday: the Speaker ordered the Sheriffs to summon their members. The Sheriffs of Middlesex, *sans cérémonie*, summoned Wilkes, instead of Lutterel. Such flagrant contempt has not been noticed!

Balls and masquerades supply the place of politics. France, to be sure, dreads the expensive spirit of our nabobs and Maccaronis, and a little our weavers, who are all starving, and would have crowded aboard the fleet.

I am very sorry your gout hangs so long upon you. Mine is quite gone, though not its consequences. I walk very poorly, but I am not young enough or strong enough to recover entirely: every fit will leave its mark. I submit to my lot with patience. My portion has, in general, been very happy, and I must not repine if pain dashes the conclusion. Adieu!

LETTER CCVI.

Arlington Street, May 29, 1773.

The Duchess of Gloucester was delivered of a Princess *this* evening; so even their holidays are taken from the Stuarts. The marriages of the two royal Dukes, at the request of his Highness of Gloucester, have been authenticated this week. The King sent the Archbishop, the Chancellor, and the Bishop of London, this day se'nnight, to examine the proofs, and report them with their opinions. They declared themselves fully satisfied with the validity of both marriages, made their report in full council before the King last Wednesday, and the depositions were entered in the council-books.

You will be surprised after this account, that the good natured part of the Duchess's sex has opened its triple mouths to question the legality of the Duke of Gloucester's marriage, because there were no witnesses. The law of England requires none. The declaration of the parties is sufficient. The Duke, on his death-bed, as he believed, at Florence, declared it to the Colonels Rainsford and Heywood,* who have taken their oaths of it, and the Duchess had owned it to the Bishop of Exeter,† which he has attested in like man-

* Grooms of the Bed-chamber to the Duke.

† Frederic Keppel, Bishop of Exeter, was married to the Duchess's elder sister.

ner—but envy is no lawyer. The Duke was advised to be married again with the King's consent, but he had too much sense to take such silly council, though the King would have allowed it. The Duke, however, submitted to the King's pleasure, if it should be thought necessary, though fully satisfied himself with the validity. The King sent him word by the Archbishop, that as his Royal Highness was satisfied, and as his Majesty had heard no objection to the validity, he did not think any farther steps necessary. In fact, the noise of those who repine at the Duchess's exaltation is a proof that they are convinced her marriage is indissoluble.

I told you the attack onLord Clive was begun: oh! he is as white as snow. He has owned all, and Machiavel would be the first to acquit him—for he has pleaded supreme policy as his motive. The House of Commons have been of Machiavel's opinion. The censure was rejected, and even a vote of applause passed. Cortez and his captains were not more spotless heroes. The East India Company have broke off the treaty with Government, but are to be forced into submission.

Your neighbour the Pope has lost a good friend, the Duchess of Norfolk.* The old Duke is eighty-nine; the next heir, drunken and mad. His son a doubtful Catholic.† Then come two zealous branches; and then Lord Carlisle.‡

LETTER CCVII.

Arlington Street, June 15, 1773.

My Lady Orford has employed great art and pains, after a study of six weeks, to write a letter without any meaning, which, with very ordinary talent, might have been written in half an hour. In order to guard every outwork of interest and cunning, she has left the *heart* of the place naked. Well! since she has no feeling for her son, and since she so much suspects my brother and me, who have acted in the fairest and most respectful manner, she teaches us to be cautious on our side. You may hint, if you will be so good, that her ladyship's letter was so indefinite, and betrayed so little confidence in Sir Edward and me, that you conclude, from the dryness and dissatisfaction of my answer, I understood it as a rebuke to my officiousness, and that, finding our zeal received so coldly, we should not trouble her ladyship any further; that it is *her* son, not ours; that we have neither authority nor interest to meddle in his affairs. All we can do is to watch over my lord's person, and to take care that every attention of humanity and tenderness be paid to him, and that his unfortunate life may be made as comfortable as possible.

* Mary Blount, wife of Edward Duke of Norfolk.
† He did afterwards turn Protestant.
‡ Query, if the branch of Suffolk does not precede that of Carlisle?

Do not wonder I can tell you little news: could you know the unceasing fatigue and perplexities I have lately gone through, you would wonder that I can find time to execute all my business, or for repose; much less can I attend to the affairs of others.

All I do know is, that the Parliament is still sitting, and will sit a fortnight longer, on Indian affairs. Lord North gets through his regulations, though with many *desagrémens*. The world has expected that he would retire: I hope he will not: he is an honest and a moderate man. On Friday Sir W. Meredith and Charles Fox drove Lord Clive out of the House, by apostrophes, like "Quousque, Catilina?"* and Charles's was admired as much as Tully's: yet Charles's fortune is as desperate as Catiline's, though he is not in Opposition.

All the world are preparing for Portsmouth; whither the King is going to see the fleet. I sigh after my own Thames, and its barges; and the more, as I can walk much better than I expected I ever should: I will not tell you how little that is; but I am content without running races, as our Maccaronis do every Sunday evening in Kensington Garden, to the high amusement and contempt of the mob; and yet the mob will be ambitious of being fashionable, and will run races too. Indeed, indeed, were not the Constitution, the boasted Constitution of England, a dead letter, it ought to take out a commission of lunacy against all its members. Adieu!

LETTER CCVIII.

Strawberry Hill, July 13, 1773.

I HAVE delayed writing to you from day to day, my dear sir, that I might be able at last to say something precisely to you about my poor nephew and myself, with regard to his affairs, chiefly for the information of his mother, who has not allured me to write herself. Her son has had a terrible relapse. Dr. Jebbe reckons this favourable, as opposite to idiotism, into which he seemed sinking.

But I will trouble you with no more details, though my head and my heart are full of them. They have jostled out every other idea, and I fear will occupy the rest of my life, for the vanity of restoring my family engrosses me. My father, excellent and wise as he was, ruined it by pushing this vanity too far. It will be mine to try to repair the havoc of three generations; and this I have had the confidence to call *duty*. But it would please my father, and that thought will be my reward; or I shall cease from this labour and all other thoughts in that small spot that puts an end to vain-glory!

When my mind reposes a little, I smile at myself. I intended to trifle out the remnant of my days; and lo! they are invaded by lawyers, stewards, physicians, and jockeys! Yes; this whole week past

* Beginning of one of Cicero's orations against Catiline.

I have been negotiating a sale of race-horses at Newmarket, and, to the honour of my transactions, the sale has turned out greatly. My Gothic ancestors are forgotten; I am got upon the turf. I give orders about the game, dispark Houghton, have plans of farming, vend colts, fillies, bullocks, and sheep, and have not yet confounded terms, nor ordered pointers to be turned to grass. I read the part of the newspapers I used to skip, and peruse the lists of sweepstakes: not the articles of intelligence, nor the relations of the shows at Portsmouth for the King, or at Oxford for the Viceroy North.* I must leave Europe and its Kings and Queens to you; we do not talk of such folks at the Inns of Court. I sold *Stoic*† for five hundred guineas: I shall never get five pence by the Monarchs of the Empire, and therefore we jockeys of the Temple, and we lawyers of Newmarket, hold them to be very insignificant individuals. The only political point that touches me at present is what does occasion much noise and trouble,—the new Act that decries guineas under weight. Though I have refused to receive a guinea myself of Lord Orford's income, yet I must see it all paid into my Lady's banker's hands, and I am now in a fright lest the purchase-money of the racers should be made in light coin,—not from suspicion of such *honourable* men, but from their inattention to money.

They say the Bank is to issue five-pound notes: at present all trade is at a stop, and the confusion is extreme. Yea, verily, the villany and iniquities of the age are bringing things rapidly to a crisis! Ireland is drained, and has not a shilling. The explosion of the Scotch banks has reduced them almost as low, and sunk their flourishing manufactures to low-water ebb. The Maccaronis are at their *ne plus ultra:* Charles Fox is already so like Julius Cæsar, that he owes a hundred thousand pounds. Lord Carlisle pays fifteen hundred, and Mr. Crew twelve hundred a-year for him—literally for him, being bound for him, while he, as like Brutus as Cæsar, is indifferent about such paltry counters: one must talk of Clodius when one has no Scipio. Yet, if the merit of some historian does not interest posterity by the beauty of his narration, this age will be as little known as the annals of the Byzantine Empire, marked only by vices and follies. What is England now?—A sink of Indian wealth, filled by nabobs and emptied by Maccaronis! A senate, sold, and despised! A country overrun by horse-races! A gaming, robbing, wrangling, railing nation, without principles, genius, character, or allies; the overgrown shadow of what it was! Lord bless me! I run on like a political barber. I must go back to my shop. I shall let farms well, if I attend to the state of the nation! What's Hecuba to me? Don't read the end of my letter to the Countess; she will think I am as mad as her son.

P.S. St. John Donatello comes down to-morrow to occupy his niche in my new chapel in the garden. With Houghton before my eyes, I am indulging myself in making this place delightful.

* Frederic Lord North, Prime Minister, and Chancellor of Oxford.
† Name of a race-horse.

LETTER CCIX.

Strawberry Hill, September 2, 1773.

You have been as kind and zealous in my cause as I expected, my dear sir; though to little purpose. Lady Orford is only sincere when she avows her insensibility for her son; or rather her resolution of caring for nothing but herself. The applications made to her have persuaded her that I am eager to have the management of her son's affairs, and consequently she thinks it would be for my interest. Now, it happens that nothing would give me so much joy as to be dispensed with from the undertaking. I engaged, because I thought it indecent to decline, when nobody else would submit to the labour, danger, and expense.

You would not wonder that I am provoked, my dear sir, if you knew what I had just suffered, when I met with this unworthy treatment. How can I describe the devastation I found? A new debt, contracted by Lord Orford, of above 40,000*l.* added to those of his grandfather and father! The estate overwhelmed by mortgages, the livings sold; the glorious house dilapidated, and open in many parts to the weather, the garden destroyed by horses, the park half unpaled, and overgrown with nettles and brambles; a crew of plunderers quartered on all parts, and the house and park mortgaged to my Lady Orford; so that if my lord were to die, my brother would have an empty title, with no estate to come to, and no house to live in. This is the splendid reversion which her ladyship thinks I am reserving for myself! Madness and thieves have anticipated my harvest, and I may glean if I please after the prodigal son, his led captains, grooms, horses, dogs, jockeys, mortgages and creditors! That is, when I have driven the money-changers out of the temple, I may cleanse it for her ladyship, and enrich myself by selling their joint-stools.

You say I attend to no politics—it is most true, and you will not wonder. At present I believe there are none in action, at least I know none, nor even news. Their Highnesses of Cumberland, I believe, are not yet sailed. You will have time enough to ask instructions, especially if it is true that they intend a long residence at Milan.

Lord Lyttelton is dead. His worthy son has added so much to his mass of character by histories too opprobrious to be entertaining, that even this age has the grace to shun him; but then he is neither a monarch nor a nabob.

The vacant green riband will certainly not bring home Lord Cowper. It is given to Lord Northington. When I want one of any hue, I will not make interest through the Great Duke. The Pope's policy in tormenting the Jesuits, when he wants to save them, passes my understanding—at least it is not the daring style of roguery in vogue.

Adieu! I am not in a pleasing temper; but fortune and spirits generally remove my greatest difficulties, and I will not distrust such old friends.

LETTER CCX.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 9, 1773.

I HAVE had another letter from you, with the total demolition of the Jesuits. A series of foolish Kings had established them: one foolish King* has put a stop to the mischief. A hundred wise Popes had supported them: one wise Pope† could not save them. This proves that worldly wisdom or folly are pretty indifferent. Times make men, not men times. Well! but here is a large vacuum in the mass of folly,—what will replace it? I ask, upon a maxim of mine, *that it is idle to cure men of a folly, unless one could cure them of being foolish.* Some new grievance will succeed to the Jesuits. Mankind will not be cheated, or tyrannized the less, because a certain black habit is abolished. There are still ermine and scarlot coats left. St. Ignatius is no more, but St. Frederic of Prussia, St. Catharine of Muscovy, are still red-lettered in respective rubrics. It is no matter whether disciples of enormous incendiaries wear beads or bayonets. Mankind, that hunt wolves, admires usurpers; and, to the disgrace of talents, Voltaire satirises Jesuits, and hymns the ravages of Poland. I should like to know for how many paltry rubles and florins he has prostituted his incense and character, —for the florins, I will trust the King of Prussia for half of them being of base metal.‡ Gray could not hear Voltaire's name with patience, though nobody admired his genius more; but he thought him so vile, that for the last years of his life he would read nothing he wrote. Well! but one must read him! Is there another author left in Europe who one wishes should write? Adieu!

LETTER CCXI.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 4, 1773.

THE Court§ that is on the road to Milan, began their journey with ugly omens. They went two nights to the play at Calais. Next morning a deputation of players went with a compliment, and to be paid. They received only three guineas. In revenge they despatched a dirty candle-snuffer with a boquet for the Princess. He was received as he deserved, *à coups de baton.* Not content, a third messenger followed to St. Omer to know if really no more than three guineas was given, the company suspecting that their comrades had pocketed part of the gratuity. The French Government have im-

* Charles III. of Spain. † Benedict XIV.

† He adulterated the coin in which we paid our subsidy to him.

§ The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland.

prisoned the last ambassador, and banished the *dramatis personæ*. This is very proper; but methinks we are seldom lucky when we are transplanted.

This is not much known here. All tongues are busy with her Grace of Kingston; the Duke is dead, and has given her his whole landed estate for her life, and is personal for ever: but the quintessence of the history is, that, to be secure of the wealth, she has avowed how little claim she had to it, being intituled in the will, "My dearest wife Elizabeth Duchess of Kingston, *alias* Elizabeth Chudleigh, *alias* Elizabeth Hervey." Did you ever hear of a Duchess described in a will as a street walker is indicted at the Old Bailey? Perhaps the House of Hervey does not make a much brighter figure in the narrative.

There is not a syllable of other news. The Parliament is not to meet till after Christmas. Wilkes and all the lately popular ringleaders of the City are squabbling who shall be Lord Mayor. At Court they are struggling who shall have the three vacant garters. I believe nobody else cares who has.

From France I hear that Monsieur d'Aiguillon begins to display the talons he has long been suspected to have. The Comte de Broglie was named to fetch the Comtesse d'Artois. As his family is Piedmontese, instead of receiving her on the confines, he asked leave to go to Turin to make his court to the King of Sardinia a month before the intended time. Receiving no answer from the Duc d'Aiguillon, Broglie wrote to reproach him. The letter gave offence, and the Duke carried it to the King. It was read in council, and His Majesty and his Minister's Minister wrote himself to the count, took away his new office, and banished him to his own seat, one hundred and twenty miles from Paris. The count is the sort of man to have done just so by any body else.

My life, which, though always occupied, has in reality been an idle one, is now passed in business. Combating rogues is not the least part of my employment. The vultures stick to the carcass of my nephew's estate, as if they had not been gorged with its flesh. The lawyers press on me with offers of managing; the servants cannot break themselves of pilfering; and my lord's friends set up promises, as if they had left him any thing to give. It is strictly true, that, from the instant he was seized, there has been but one universal thought of plundering. I create enemies at every step, and must expect torrents of abuse, because I am determined not to deserve it.

My administration is an epitome of greater scenes; and, happily, I enter upon it at an age when every passion is cooled. I shall be inexcusable if I do any thing but right. My father alone was capable of acting on one great plan of honesty from the beginning of his life to the end. He could for ever wage war with knaves and malice, and preserve his temper; could know men, and yet feel for them; could smile when opposed, and be gentle after triumph. He was steady, without being eager; and successful, without being vain. He forgot the faults of others, and his own merits; and was as incapable of fear

as of doing wrong. Oh! how unlike him I am! how passionate, timid, and vain-glorious! How incapable of copying him, even in the diminutive sphere! in short, I have full as much to correct in myself as to control in others; and I must look into my own breast as often as into bills and accounts. Adieu!

LETTER CCXII.

Arlington Street, Nov. 28, 1773.

Don't commend me yet, my dear sir; I will be a good man before I die, if it is possible; but at present I am only learning virtues at the expense of all the world. For some time I had wrapped myself up in my indifference and integrity; and hoped the former, like ceder-chips, would preserve the latter, as it lay useless by me in my drawer. The swarms of rogues that my nephew's affairs have let loose upon me, oblige me to produce all my little stock of honesty; and all the service I intend to do myself by my endless fatigue, shall be to make myself better. The possession of one vice, pride, and the want of two more, ambition and self-interest, have preserved me from many faults; but into how many more have I fallen! The fruit is past; but the soil shall be improved. I do not talk with a lawyer, that, at the same time, I am not looking into him as a glass, and setting my mind into a handsomer attitude. When he gives me advice, I often say, silently, "This I will be sure not to follow;" for if many try to cheat me, some are as zealous to make me defraud *for* my family; which though more likely to tempt me than if it were for myself, shall not make me swerve from that narrow middle path, that does exist, but is seldom perceptible, especially as we rarely look for it but through spectacles that we take care should not magnify.

Oh, my dear sir, we are wretched and contemptible creatures! Have I not been writing a panegyric here, when I meant a satire on myself, and did I not dare to finish it? I am not mercenary, and therefore lash those that are. I pick out a single negative quality, which I happened to be born without, and think that, like charity, it is to cover a multitude of sins! I am a Pharisee, and affect the modest humility of the publican! Well, I give up all pretensions; but I will try to have some positive merit. I never thought of it while I was idle—my life is now a scene of incessant business. I shall never learn my business; but, thank God! virtue is not so intricate as law and farming. My pride,—no, pray let me keep that: if I expel it, seven worse devils will enter in; and I should sell another passion, a very predominant one, the love of liberty. While all the world is selling the thing, pray let me, if but as a *virtuoso*, preserve the affection, which is already a curiosity, and will soon, I believe, be a unique.

Luckily for you, I have not time to talk any longer about myself,

which you see one loves to do, even though it be to rail at one's self: indeed, like Montaigne, one contrives to specify no failings without giving them a foil that makes them look like virtues. For my part, I forswear any good qualities; I am mortified at knowing I have none; or if I have had, and Virtue fathered them, Pride was their mother, and, whoever she laid them to, Hypocrisy was her *galant*. Still, if she be not past child-bearing, her husband shall yet have some lawful issue.

News there is none; and if there were, have I time to hear or remember it? There are scarce three themes. The great one is the Irish absentée tax, which the Ministers first espoused, then tried to avoid, and is now likely to be saddled on them by mismanagement at Dublin. They have got too great a majority there, who will carry it for them in spite of England's and Ireland's teeth too.

Lord Holland is dying, is paying Charles Fox's debts, or most of them, for they amount to one hundred and thirty thousand pounds! ay, ay; and has got a grandson and heir. I thought this child a prophet, who came to foretell the ruin and dispersion of the *Jews;* but while there is a broker or a gamester upon the face of the earth, Charles will not be out of debt. Pray, do your crews of English at Florence emulate their countrymen? I saw a letter the other day from Aix, which said that a young Englishman there had lost twenty-two thousand pounds at one sitting. Madness and perdition are gone forth! Is it possible that we should not be undone?

I can tell you of two English above the common standard coming to you. The great Indian Verres, or Alexander, if you please, Lord Clive, is one: the other, Lady Mary Coke.* She was much a friend of mine, but a late marriage,† which *she* particularly disapproved, having flattered herself with the hopes of one‡ just a step higher, has a little cooled our friendship. In short, though she is so greatly born, she has a phrenzy for royalty, and will fall in love with, and at the feet of, the great duke and duchess, especially the former, for next to being an empress herself, she adores the Empress-Queen, or did—for perhaps that passion not being quite reciprocal, may have waned. However, bating every English person's madness, for every English person must have their madness, Lady Mary has a thousand virtues and good qualities. She is noble, generous, high spirited, undauntable; is most friendly, sincere, affectionate, and above any mean action. She loves attention, and I wish you to pay it, even for my sake, for I would do any thing to serve her. I have often tried to laugh her out of her weakness; but, as she is very serious, she was so in that, and if all the sovereigns in Europe combined to slight her, she still would put her trust in the next generation of princes. Her heart is excellent, and deserves and would become a

* Fourth daughter of John Duke of Argyll and widow of Edward Lord Viscount Coke, only son of Thomas Earl of Leicester.

† Of the Duke of Gloucester and Lady Waldegrave.

‡ She had flattered herself that Edward Duke of York, elder brother of the Duke of Gloucester, would marry her.

crown, and that is the best of all excuses for desiring one. I am glad you will have so little trouble with those* that are nearer.

Thank you a thousand times for your anecdotes of the Jesuits. It is comfortable to see the world ever open its eyes. If it had all Argus's, it would have need to stare with every pair; but I think it was said of them, that some watched while others slept. Just so would the world's, and say with the sluggard in the Proverbs, "A little more slumber, a little more sleep, a little more folding of the hands to sleep." The Jesuits have many collaterals, besides other monks. Adieu!

P.S. We have just heard that the tax on Irish absentées has been thrown off even at Dublin.

LETTER CCXIII.

Arlington Street, December 21, 1773.

It is an age since I have written to you, my dear sir, but I have had nothing to say, and too much to do. Not that my business would have prevented my hearing common events; the calm of the times and the emptiness of the town have given birth to nothing singular; the newspapers are my witnesses, which though always full of lies, seldom fail to reach the outlines at least of incidents. To talk of the manners of the age, is the occupation of a morose old man. That they augment, I must not say improve, in extravagance, is not the symptom of my growing old, (though I do,) but of our country's growing so—and what is the old age of a country? Is it not its approaching to dotage and caducity? If the definition is true, we grow every day more blind, deaf, tottering, and distempered.

Examples are better than doctrines, especially in a letter, from their brevity. Charles Fox, the type, the archetype of the century, is just *relaxed* by his father from part of his debts. Lord Holland has paid a hundred thousand pounds more for him, and not above half as much remains unpaid. How one should detest Lord Holland if one were a father, when he sets such a precedent before the eyes of younger sons! Nay, elder sons must hate him too: they used to think profusion was to descend only like titles in the right line. My thoughts naturally revert to that right line. My poor nephew, I hope, is sinking into imbecility, but the passage is dreadful.

My business occupies my whole time. I have none for politics, public or private. My health declines, and so do my animal spirits, as I am sensible my letters show you. My amusements are at an end, for I have no leisure for them; and therefore whatever curiosity intercepts our correspondence, it will be gratified with no entertainment. I am sorry for your sake that it is grown so dull,—I will not say uninteresting, for whatever touches me so nearly is not indiffe

* The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland, then in Italy.

rent to you. When I revive, or the world is more animated, you will know it, for the lifelessness is not all my own: I am apt enough to be infected with the temper of the times, though but a distant spectator; but I will have done accounting for having nothing to say, which the account itself proves. You have seen me a Proteus in temper; you now find that Proteus's decline is like that of the other old folks.

P.S. Andrew Stone* is dead suddenly, who, I remember, made you pay very dearly for the no-protection he gave you.

LETTER CCXIV.

Arlington Street, Dec. 30, 1773.

Oh! my dear sir, you need not make any apologies about the lady,† who is so angry with your tribunals, and a little with you. If you have yet received the letter I wrote to you concerning her some time ago, you will have seen that I cannot be surprised at what has happened. It is a very good heart, with a head singularly awry; in short, an extraordinary character even in this soil of phenomena. Though a great lady, she has a rage for great personages, and for being one of them herself; and with these pretensions, and profound gravity, has made herself ridiculous at home, and delighted *de promener sa folie par toute l'Europe.* Her perseverance and courage are insurmountable, as she showed in her conduct with her husband‡ and his father, in which contest she got the better. Her virtue is unimpeachable, her friendship violent, her anger deaf to remonstrances. She has cried for forty people, and quarrelled with four hundred. As her understanding is not so perfect as her good qualities, she is not always in the right, nor is skilful in making a retreat. I endeavoured to joke her out of her heroine-errantry, but it was not well taken. As she does the strangest things upon the most serious consideration, she had no notion that her measures were not prudent and important; and therefore common sense, not delivered as an oracle, only struck her as ludicrous. This offence, and the success of my niece in a step equally indiscreet, has a little cooled our intimacy; but, as I know her intrinsic worth, and value it, I beg you will only smile at her pouting, and assist her as much as you can. She might be happy and respected, but will always be miserable, from the vanity of her views, and her passion for the extraordinary. She idolized the Empress-Queen, who did not correspond with equal sen-

* Formerly Secretary to the Duke of Newcastle, afterwards Treasurer to the Princess Dowager of Wales.

† Lady Mary Coke.

‡ Lord Coke was half mad. His father and he confined her. She swore the peace against her husband, and the King's Bench ordered her own family to have access to her; soon after which Lord Leicester and Lord Coke consented to her living at Sudbrook, the villa of her mother.

timents. The King of Prussia, with more feminine malice, would not indulge her even with a sight of him; her non-reception at Parma is of the same stuff; and I am amazed that the littleness she has seen in so many sovereigns has not cured her of royal admirations. These Solomons delight to sit to a maker of wax-work, and to have their effigies exhibited round Europe, and yet lock themselves up in their closets when a Queen of Sheba comes to stare at their wisdom!

I am glad you are not likely to be embarrassed with our Court-ambulant. How you must dread your countrymen and women, from the highest to the lowest! Such a fund of follies, for which you must seem answerable without any power of control!

Thank you for the Gazette on the gunpowder-plot.* How amazing that the Jesuits should have preserved that paper, after so long warning of their fate! Did they think it a monument that would redound to their honour?

My nephew, after being for nine weeks at the lowest pitch of deplorable frenzy, has suddenly emerged to a strange degree of reason, and has written three letters with more coolness and clearness than he did almost when he was, what was called, in his senses. I am afraid to flatter myself with the thought of this being a recovery; and as much alarmed lest he should avail himself of this interval to deceive his attendants, and do himself some harm.

Dec. 31st.

Doctors Battie and Jebbe have confirmed the wonderful recovery of Lord Orford, and though so contradictory to the sentence they had pronounced upon him three weeks ago, have the fairness to own their mistake and surprise. He is in fact come to his senses so much, that they have opened his whole case to him, and told him that they expect he will be quite well if he keeps himself cool and quiet for some time, neither writing letters nor seeing company, which he has promised. Dr. Jebbe is, I think, rather less sanguine than Battie.

Don't imagine that my mind is so occupied with these affairs, that I neglect talking to you of any thing else. The times are favourable to indulging one's own reveries. The Parliament is met, but the Opposition is so quiet, that even their general, Lord Rockingham, is not come to town; nor does any body foresee one hostile debate. The Duke of Richmond alone maintains the war, but in that distant quarter the India-House, where he has given the ministerial forces a great defeat. It is not a season more fruitful of foreign news, unless a clould in Russia increases to a storm. An impostor† there, who calls himself Peter III. claims the crown for his pretended son, and has beaten the troops sent against him. I shall not wonder if this attempt costs him and the great Duke himself, their lives: nor shall I be surprised if France or Prussia has conjured up this phantom.

* The plan of which was found in the Jesuits' College at Rome.
† His name was Pugatschaff.

Methinks I wish Lady Mary had left you. Her disposition will always raise storms, and you may be involved in them as innocently as you have been. I expect to hear of her in some strange fracas at Rome; and as there is another Archduchess at Naples, whatever vision she is disappointed in, will be laid to the implacability of Juno.* For yourself, however, you may be easy, for nobody here sees Lady Mary's disasters in a serious light.

What can I tell you else? The Opera is a kind of Italian news: Miss Davis has great success. I cannot say she charms me. Her knowledge of music seems greater than her taste; or perhaps it is that I do not like the new taste. Milico is jealous of her, and they make something like parties; but operas are not upon the footing now of creating much discord. They are ill attended; and the burlettas are so bad, and the dancers so execrable, that the managers are afraid of not being able to go on. What shall I tell you has succeeded to politics and pleasures? nothing. Nothing has beaten out every thing. The Maccaronis, amongst whom exists the only symptom of vivacity, are all undone; and can distinguish themselves by insensibility alone. They neither feel for their families nor themselves. How long this general lethargy will last I do not know: I remember when it would have grieved me. Adieu!

LETTER CCXV.

Feb. 2, 1774.

I KNOW little of public affairs, nor trouble myself with them but as news: and the only article in my letters which could excite particular curiosity, is very rarely there, and of which I believe *I* know less than any body. I never was a favourite in a certain place,† and am now particularly ill there for having spoken my mind with more freedom than was welcome; but I shall die with the best legacy my father left me, his *Fari quæ sentiat*—an impertinent motto, when the *fari* is unnecessary.

Your Scotch Princess,‡ I doubt, is really mad. Does not she put you in mind of your friend Lord Fane,§ who kept his bed six weeks, because the Duke of Newcastle, in one of his letters, forgot to sign himself your *very* humble servant as usual, and only put your humble servant? These follies would have done very well, when folks fancied *their* stars did every thing, and had good and bad demons; but *toute* demon as the Empress-Queen is, and womanish too, I don't believe that, like Juno, she persecutes the pious Æneas in every voyage and peregrination. Then, what an impertinent quarrel that with

* The Empress-Queen.
† Gloucester House.
‡ Lady Mary Coke.
§ Charles, last Viscount Fane, Minister at Florence.

Lord Huntingdon!* One sees indeed how peevish and persecuting her ladyship would be, if she were Empress or Queen; but it is more ridiculous to proscribe Princes and Princesses, when one is nobody one's self. When the Sophi of Persia has dined, a herald gives leave to all other monarchs to go to dinner: but if a merchant's widow at Ispahan was to give the same permission, to her Sovereign, she would be shut up in a madhouse, though she were to insist she had been married to Kouli Khan. I really wish you were well rid of her: cannot you persuade her to go to Rome, where there is a mock court that has nothing better to do than to quarrel about a mock etiquette?

We have no news public or private; but there is an ostrich-egg laid in America, where the Bostonians have canted three hundred chests of tea into the ocean, for they will not drink tea with our Parliament. My understanding is so narrow, and was confined so long to the little meridian of England, that at this late hour of life it cannot extend itself to such huge objects as East and West Indies, though every body else is acquainted with those continents as well as with the map of Great Britain. Lord Chatham talked of conquering America in Germany; I believe England will be conquered some day or other in New England or Bengal. I think I have heard of such a form in law, as such a one of the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields in Asia: St. Martin's parish literally reaches now to the other end of the globe, and we may be undone a twelvemonth before we hear a word of the matter—which is not convenient, and a little drawback on being masters of dominions a thousand times bigger than ourselves. Well! I suppose, some time or other, some learned Jesuit Needham will find out that Indostan was peopled by a colony from Cripplegate or St. Mary Axe, which will compensate for a thousand misfortunes.

You see, my dear sir, I forget my troubles the moment they are at an end. Every year's events are stale by the next. One's cares, once at an end, are but old accidents, and to be flung by, like an old almanac. Politicians live by the future; I care only about the present; and the present being very calm, is worth enjoying. Adieu!

LETTER CCXVI.

Arlington Street, Feb. 23, 1774.

I have taken care not to be too sanguine about the continuation of my nephew's recovery. I have convinced him that I can greatly raise his estate, and he has sent for me to go with him to Houghton.

* Francis Earl of Huntingdon. Lady Mary Coke quarrelled with him for waiting on the Duchess of Cumberland in Italy. Lady Mary Coke tried to persuade people that she had been contracted to the Duke of York, and signed her letters, "Marye," part of the y signifying e or not, as was necessary.

I shall add this codicil to all I have done, and then shall desire to depart in peace. I again see that my family might be saved; but this is a vision which the first warm weather may disperse! And though visions are amusing, I know their texture too well to sigh at their evanition. With what joy I went to Strawberry Hill the other day alone, where I had not been in two months! How my pictures and books and I embraced after so long a separation! What a knave or fool must Charles V. have been to repent of having done with knaves and fools! I have reigned eight months, and have had the gout as he had, but know a little better than he did how to value health and liberty. But, though so much wiser than Charles V. I have not quite the sagacity of Solomon, who pronounced every thing vanity and vexation of spirit. I have finished my temple, and enjoy it. I delight in my trees and shrubs, though I don't know why some are tall, and some short; and learned doctors divert me, though they cannot solve my doubts. Our Sanhedrim entertained me last week, as I am no longer a member. They were grievously affronted in the person of their prolocutor; and, no doubt, by the instigation of the wicked one—at least it is certain that the agents were *devils*. In short, the press, which exceeds even the Day of Judgment, for it brings to light every body's faults, and a good deal more, fell upon the Speaker of the House of Commons: he complained: the printer was taken up, and accused the Reverend Parson Horne as the author. The House concluded that the divine would shelter himself in the City, and that the magistrates there would protect him—no such thing; he came to the bar, acted respect, denied the charge—nay, artfully reduced them to this dilemma: Was the printer's deposition the accusation or the evidence? whichever it was, the counterpart would be wanted. The janissaries of the law, who can tie knots more easily than loosen them, were at a nonplus, though they said a great deal. Horne burst out into a laugh. They were forced to vote they would get more evidence; and sent for the printer's devils, who appeared the next day, but still to no purpose. None of them knew a syllable, as they hoped to be saved, of Horne being the author. Well! what to do? Why, nothing. Horne was dismissed, and the printer remains in custody. The majesty of the Senate is a little singed.

Well; but I must do justice: the press has done some justice. There is just published a very good dialogue between three persons of some note—namely, the partitioners of Poland. There is a great deal of wit and just satire in this piece; but though the press can pass sentence, I doubt it cannot see it be executed. I do not know but part of it may be put in force. The rebellion in Russia still exists, which looks a little serious. How the Poles must pray that it may prosper! The King of Prussia is so thorough-paced a villian, that I should not be surprised if he had set it on foot. I am sure he will support it, if he can see his interest in it. How happy would it be to have those three monsters punished by each other!

I am heartily glad you are rid of the posthumous Duchess, who

thinks herself the object at which all the darts of one of those furies are aimed. She is got to Turin, and will be at home in about two months. Seriously, I apprehend that she is literally mad. Her late visions pass pride and folly. The world here is exceedingly disposed to laugh at her; and by a letter that is already come from her to Princess Amelia, she does not at all mean to keep her imaginary persecutions secret. Indeed, indeed, my dear sir, I have long told you that we are all mad, and every thing one hears proves it. Nay, don't you find every English man or woman who arrives at Florence, out of their senses? I am persuaded that if you were not discretion itself, your letters would be as full of extravagant events as mine are. What think you of that pompous piece of effrontery and imposture, the Duchess of Kingston? Is there common sense in her ostentation and grief, and train of black crape and band of music? I beg you would not be silent on that chapter; it is as comic a scene as that of the Countess Trifaldine in Don Quixote; and though she is the high and mighty Princess, at least she does not yet pretend to be a royal one.

I have had mighty civil despatches from my sister-in-law. She desires the continuation of our correspondence, which I shall now and then obey. I may be obliged to renew it; and, therefore, it is best to keep it up. I have no resentment to her. I wish to keep her and her son on good terms. I have done all I can to persuade him to write to her, and he promises it. Adieu!

P.S.—24th. The famous Charles Fox was this morning turned out of his place of First Lord of the Treasury, for great flippancies in the House towards Lord North. His parts will now have a full opportunity of showing whether they can balance his character, or whether patriotism can whitewash it. The Queen was brought to bed this evening of another prince.

Lady Bute desires me to tell you that Mrs. Anne Pitt is going to Pisa, and that I would recommend her to you. I should do that on my own account, as I am very intimate with her. You know she is Lord Chatham's sister, as well as his very image; but you must take care not to make your court to her on that head, as they are no dear friends. She has excellent parts, a great deal of wit, and not so sweet a temper as to contradict the likeness of her features. She has at times been absolutely *English**, but not in the present style of the fashion, and has much too good sense to exhibit any extraordinary scenes. She is extremely well-bred, and knows the world perfectly. In short, she will be much pleased with your attentions, and will please you in a very different way from the generality of our exports. I dread sending you any body that I have not known long, and some that I do; but there is no danger from Mrs. Pitt, who has always lived in the great world, and is not of an age to play the fool—especially on a small theatre. She has not succeeded so well as she in-

* Out of her senses. She died so some years after.

tended on a very large one;* but you may depend upon it, Tuscany will not tempt her. I will not answer but she may take liberties with *some*† that have been tempted by *great dutchies;* but you will have the prudence not to seem to hear what it is better not to answer.

LETTER CCXVII.

Arlington Street, March 28, 1774.

I HAVE just gone through a fortnight's experience of most of my nephew's characteristics. I have been with him at Houghton, and am returned full of sorrow, convinced, on one hand, that if he remains in what are called his senses, his conduct will not be more reasonable than formerly; and, on the other, expecting a relapse.

Your correspondent at Turin‡ has found so flattering a reception at that Court, that it has smoothed all the loyalty of her brow, and suspended hostilities against Vienna so far, that she has proclaimed an armistice, and sent orders to her Ministers at home to observe a strict silence on her former despatches. I am glad you will be relieved from all our wandering Courts, except her Grace of Kingston's, which is so contemptible, that, were I in your place, I should be extremely determined to let it give me no trouble.

We are in profound tranquillity here. Even America gives us no pain—at least it makes little sensation, for the Opposition have not taken up the cause; in the first place, because the Opposition is very feeble; and, secondly, because it has a great mind to be less; that is, they are, many of the few, endeavouring to wriggle into Court by different doors. The general tone against the Bostonians is threats. It remains to be seen whether America will be as pliant as we say they must be. I don't pretend to guess, for I seldom guess right; but we could even afford to lose America. Every day gives us more East Indies. Advice has just come that we have taken Tanjore, and a General Smith has got 150,000*l.* for his own share. Spaniards are forced to dig in mines before they are the better for the gold of Potosi; we have nothing to do but to break a truce, and plunder a city, and we find the pretty metal ready coined and brilliants ready cut and mounted. Nay, don't frown; depredation is authorized by act of Parliament, at least by the vote of the House of Commons that acquitted and applauded Lord Clive. How much more just would that sentence of a barbarian ambassador be, if applied to our Parliament than to the senate of Rome, that he thought he saw an assembly of kings: we sanctify such violences and iniquities, that one should think the House of Commons were composed of three hundred and sixty-five Empresses and Kings of Prussia.

* She was Privy Purse to the Princess Dowager, over whom she had expected much influence, but meddling too much, was disgraced.

† Duchess of Cumberland. ‡ Lady Mary Coke.

The Duke of Devonshire marries Lady Georgiana Spenser; she is a lovely girl, natural, and full of grace; he, the first match in England. Your old friend, Lord Pelham, is made Justice in Eyre. There are some other promotions of no moment to you, that you will read in the newspapers.

I don't know what to do with the letter you sent me. I have sent a servant all round the town and to the Opera House, but can get no tidings of a Scultore Capezzuoli; you must send me a direction, or I shall never find him. Do his correspondents think that London would stand in the palm of one's hand, like Florence?

LETTER CCXVIII.

Strawberry Hill, May 1, 1774.

The period of time, rather than any thing I have to say, brings you my letter. Political events are so much the materials of a distant correspondence, that I don't know how ours would have crept on for so many years, if the last thirty had been as barren as the present one. There is indeed a great business in agitation, and has been for some time; but, without the thorough-bass of Opposition, it makes no echo out of Parliament. Its parliamentary name is *Regulations for Boston.* Its essence, the question of sovereignty over America. Shall I tell you in one word my opinion? If the Bostonians resist, the dispute will possibly be determined in favour of the Crown by force. If they temporize or submit, waiting for a more favourable moment, and preparing for it, the wound, skinned over, will break out hereafter with more violence—not that I lay any stress on my own conjectures. People collect their guesses from what they have read, heard, or seen; but times are unlike; and a single man* can sometimes give a new colour to an age.

Would not one think that people die or marry only out of opposition too? There is not any thing more new in private than in public life. One would think the summer began two months sooner than it used to do; yet the Parliament will probably sit late, in expectation of hearing how the rigour exercised on the Bostonians is received by them and the other colonies.

Lady Mary Coke is not yet arrived, nor was even got to Paris; at least, a letter I received thence yesterday does not mention her. She is expected at home some time in this month.

I have not yet been able to discover Cappezzuoli the sculptor, for whom you sent me a letter long ago. I have inquired at every statuary's in town to no purpose. Mr. Chute's servant, Martelli, is now upon the hunt for him; but his correspondent ought to know that London is a little bigger than Florence. It was directed to Capezzuoli, Scultore â Londrà. One cannot find a needle in such a bottle of

* This proved the case in Dr. Franklin.

streets. London increases every day; I believe there will soon be no other town left in England, for migrations increase as fast as buildings. All the Scotch and Irish that don't come to London go to America. If you ever return, as I devoutly wish, you will find a larger city than Florence, of which you never saw a street; without including half the adjacent villages, which the town has surrounded or joined. Perhaps it will be at last like Palmyra, in the midst of a vast desert.

Next to gaming, which subsides a little from want of materials, the predominant folly is pictures: I beg their pardon for associating them with gaming. Sir George Colbroke, a citizen and martyr to what is called *speculation*, had his pictures sold by auction last week. A view of Nimeguen, by Cuyp, not large, and which he had bought very dearly for seventy guineas, sold for two hundred and ninety! If they could be sold in proportion, the collection at Houghton would fetch two hundred thousand. A Mr. Pearson, too, who married the Giacomazzi, brought over a few, particularly from Venice. He sold one Guido for two thousand pounds to Mr. Duncombe. The "Doctors" at Houghton, the first picture in England, and equal to any in Italy but Raphael's, cost but a little above six hundred pounds. Well! we are very rich and very quiet. I hope it will last! Adieu!

P.S. Miss Davies, the Inglesina, is more admired than any thing I remember of late years in Operas; but though music is so much in fashion, that some of our fine gentlemen learn to sing, it holds no proportion with hazard and Newmarket. The Cuzzoni and Faustina would not be paid higher than a race-horse.

LETTER CCXIX.

Strawberry Hill, May 15, 1774.

This is a great morsel of news indeed—nay, not that we know actually yet that Louis Quinze is dead; but we conclude so. Lord Stormont's courier arrived on Wednesday, and had left Paris on Sunday night at eleven, when the hiccup was begun. He said he might not be able to write again soon, as all horses would be stopped. Some pretend to say that the King died on Tuesday, others conclude he is recovered—but horses would not be stopped on that account—on the contrary. Many foretell war—not on knowledge. The Dauphin is little known—the first acts of a new King are seldom the expression of his meaning. There is a notion he likes the Chancellor. If Monsieur de Choiseul returns to power, it will want no prophet to announce war. Two of the King's daughters, though they never had the small-pox, attended him, and it is said the Dauphin saw him since the eruption, which was not very prudent. Madame du Barri was retired to the Duc d'Aiguillon's at Ruel. This is all I have heard that I believe. One never attains the last and first accounts of a reign truly, till half a century is past. What is first said is ge-

nerally the least to be credited. Those reports are coined by vanity of knowing, by credulity, and conjecture. We believed firmly for two days that Sutton the inoculist was at Paris, and that Lord Stormont had been desired to carry him to the King. Sutton was actually in London.

Well! this is an event that will have great consequences in Europe, or in France. Will the new King go to war, or restore the Jesuits? Will the Dauphiness have any weight? Will the Emperor?—Oh! but they say the King of Prussia is dying too. That would make a greater change. The Czarina pretends to have beaten Pugatscheff—but I don't think the story has much the air of truth. A rebel so often beaten, and that still makes a stand, is a new kind of rebel. They are not apt to have so many resources.

The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland have been landed this week. I can believe easily what you tell me of his confidence to Mr. G. The honey-moon was waned to less than a half-moon before he left England.

Pray be very circumspect with your lodger.* There is great art, and no sweet temper. I have received a bushel of thanks for your civilities, which I imputed to your own good nature and good breeding, as you deserve.

My late ward† has fairly washed his hands of me on some very necessary remonstrances on his health and affairs, which I could not in conscience avoid making. I have not had proper returns where I deserved them, if possible, more; but one must do what is right without reward; nor am I of an age to take disappointments to heart. To do right and be at peace is enough; nay, is not doing right being at peace? Kings may die, and men may be mad: can one save them, or cure them? Shall one not enjoy one's own little lot because inevitable events come to pass? Indeed for the loss of their Majesties it is not necessary to preach patience to any body. The smiles that waited on their every word are at the service of the successor.

Apropos, the other day the Chapter of Westminster opened the grave of Edward I., and found his body, crown, velvet and tissue perfect. The flesh of his lips and cheeks was sound, and his hands perfect, except that one had lost its nails. There was a gauze on the face which had grown into the grain, and they could not lift it up. His measure was six feet two. They had found in "Rymer," that they were obliged to bestow a new cerecloth on the corpse every year. That poor service was forgotten after two reigns, and curiosity alone recalled it now after five hundred years. The most extraordinary part is, that it should have been kept up even for two reigns. The Church is seldom a more grateful courtier than a Lord of the Bed-chamber. If they cry up a benefactor, it is to inculcate imitation of his *largesses*. I pity Kings; they have more false friends than any body; and those they love most are certainly the falsest, for they have flattered them most. Louis le Bien-aimé was stabbed, and

* Mrs. Anne Pitt. † His nephew the Earl of Orford.

Henry IV., who deserved that title, was murdered. Every action of a King's life is watched and recorded: what private man could stand such a scrutiny? The greater their power the less they can content, for every man measures his wishes by their power, not by his own merit; and, as Louis Quatorze said, "When I give a place, I make twenty discontented and one ungrateful." Who almost that ever reigned would not be shocked to read his own history?

The Duke of Cleveland is dead: the greater part of his estate comes to the Duke of Grafton, and I believe either the title of Cleveland or Southampton. The rest of his fortune goes to his nephew, Lord Darlington.

Lord Ilchester* has had a stroke of palsy, and it is not the first. How thick calamities fall on that family! Lord Holland drags on a wretched life, and Lady Holland is dying of a cancer. Their youngest, and only good son† is just gone with his regiment to America.

Tuesday, 17th.

Well! the King of France *is* dead; but nothing further is yet known. The new King was not to see the ministers for nine days, so to-morrow will be a bustling day in that Court, and of some importance to this! Adieu!

LETTER CXX.

Strawberry Hill, June 8, 1774.

We are still in the dark about Louis XVI., and do not know whether he designs to make war on the old ministers, on us, or on the ladies of pleasure. They represent him as covetous, but he has only retrenched some tables at Court, and has remitted a great sum to the people. As the blessings of the latter are more desirable than those of the nobility, I am apt to think they are more prevalent too than the maledictions of the latter.

As yet there seems to be no colours hung out by which one can judge. D'Aiguillon, it is thought, will fall, though he is said to have betrayed‡ Madame du Barri, and to have prevented her escape. Were I an absolute monarch, which such a man would make one wish one's-self, I would forbid him ever to set his foot in a town where there was a single gentleman, as not fit to breathe where there is one. Old La Vrillière,§ another wretch, is likely to fall too, unpitied. I wish the Chancellor‖ may too, who is a villanous ba-

* Stephen Fox, first Earl of Ilchester, and elder brother of Henry Lord Holland.

† Gen. Henry Fox, the father of the present Minister to the United States of America.—Ed.

‡ This did not prove true.

§ Mons. de St. Florentine, Secretary of State, and then Duc de la Vrillière.

‖ Maupeon.

shaw. Maurepas does not gain ground. No exiles are recalled. Were the Duc de Choiseul to rise again, I could easily tell what would happen. The Mesdames have had the small-pox, and have escaped, which makes one glad after such meritorious behaviour,—meritorious, but which it was cruel not to restrain.

Indeed, we want no foreign war: the scene in America grows serious. We have this week heard that New York has taken as warm a part as Boston against the teas. The House of Commons sits very late every day, though at this season, on a bill for settling Canada; and though it is said the Parliament will rise next week, I should think the prorogation would be very short, till the news from America are better. Lord Chatham has appeared in the House of Lords, but pleased no body but Lord Temple, with whom he is again strictly united, which you may mention to his sister. This is the sum of public history, at least that I know, who have been very little in town this month.

The Duke of Devonshire and Lady Georgiana Spenser were married on Sunday; and this month Lord Stanley marries Lady Betty Hamilton. He gives her a most splendid entertainment to-morrow at his villa in Surrey, and calls it a *fête champêtre*. It will cost five thousand pounds. Every body is to go in masquerade, but not in mask. He has bought all the orange-trees round London, and the haycocks, I suppose, are to be made of straw-coloured satin.

Lady Mary Coke is arrived. She has not been false to the Duke of York's bed, but was so frail as to cuckold his vault; for she went down into that at St. Denis with Louis Quatorze, as she did into that at Westminster when the Princess died. Her Grace of Kingston, though a phenomenon, is no original: the purchase of Sixtus Quintus's villa seems to be an imitation of that stroller, Queen Christina.

My chapel is finished, and Donatello's St. John is enshrined in it. In truth, every chamber at Strawberry is enriched with your presents, which are its most valuable ornaments. The Caligula, the Castiglione, Bianca Capello, Benvenuto Cellini's casket, the Florentine box. Take notice, I have not an inch of space left, neither in my house nor my gratitude. I have even forgotten some, as the intaglia of an Apollo, and perhaps twenty things more.

I am sorry to tell Mrs. Pitt that her house at Knightsbridge has been led astray, the moment she turned her back: see what it is to live in a bad neighbourhood! *Pittsburgh*, the Temple of Vesta, is as naughty as Villa Kingstoniana; not that Dr. Elliot's pretty wife* has married another husband in his life-time; but she has eloped with my Lord Valentia, who has another wife, and some half-dozen children. The sages of Doctors' Commons are to be applied to. I am much obliged to Mrs. Pitt for forcing you to tell me you are safe

* Miss Dalrymple, wife of Sir John Elliot, the physician, from whom she was divorced for many adulteries, and became a celebrated courtezan, known by the name of Dolly the Tall. Sir J. Elliot had bought Mrs. Anne Pitt's villa at Knightsbridge, where the Duchess of Kingston and the Duke of Rutland's mistress had villas also.

from your verdigrise. It would have been shocking to have heard it, and waited for the post. Her ball she described you was very like the cloth of a thousand yards, on which were painted all the Kings and Queens in the universe, and which cloth was lapped up in the kernel of a nut. You are very happy in having such company; it will indemnify you for forty dozen of bears and bear-leaders, that you have been endeavouring for these thirty years to tame, and the latter half of which never are licked into form. Adieu!

P.S. I am reading Montaigne's Travels which have lately been found; there is little in them but the baths and medicines he took, and what he had every where for dinner. He was in Italy in 1580, and the only thing that has struck me in the first volume was his seeing Bianca Capello at dinner. He describes her very like your—my picture. She sat above the Duke, and her brother and his wife dined with them, and the Cardinal Ferdinand. Montaigne says that the houses in Italy at that time had no glass windows. His editor, who is a silly fellow, says Pius V. obliged Cosimo the Great to marry* his mistress Camilla Martelli. I never heard this anecdote; is it true? Pray ask Mrs. Pitt if Madame Griffoni, though thirteen years younger, preserves any remains of beauty, like the Duchess of Queensberry. I take my Signora to be full threescore.

11th.

I had forgotten to send my letter to town, and so can answer one I have this instant received from you. I am more sorry for your disappointment in losing your new friend† than surprised. There is a strange oddness, that at times has been more than oddness; in short, I do not know whether I am quite sorry; it is better to have parted in violent friendship than the contrary.

The Duc d'Aiguillon is certainly out of place, and is succeeded by M. de Vergennes, Ambassador at Stockholm, of whom I know nothing; M. de Muy has the *departement de la Guerre*. The young King seems in no hurry. There is a notion that he does not love the English. I don't know where he will find the Minister that does; but if the Queen has influence, and her brother has any over her, we shall not have a war—from thence: I will not answer for Spain.

LETTER CCXXI.

Strawberry Hill, July 10, 1774.

The month is come round, and I have, besides, a letter of yours to answer; and yet if I were not as regular as a husband or a merchant in paying my just dues, I think I should not perform the function, for I certainly have no natural call to it at present. Nothing in yours

* Cosimo I. did marry Camilla Martelli. † Mrs. Anne Pitt.

requires a response, and I have nothing new to tell you. Yet, if one once breaks in upon punctuality, adieu to it! I will not give out, after a perseverance of three-and-thirty years; and so far I will not resemble a husband.

The whole blood royal of France is recovered from the small-pox. Both Choiseul and Broglio are recalled, and I have some idea that even the old Parliament will be so. The King is adored, and a most beautiful compliment has been paid to him: some body wrote under the statue of Henri Quartre, *Resurrexit.*

Lord Holland is at last dead, and Lady Holland is at the point of death. His sons would still be in good circumstances, if they were not *his* sons, but he had so totally spoiled the two eldest, that they would think themselves bigots if they were to have common sense. The prevailing style is not to reform, though Lord Lyttelton pretends to have set the example. Gaming for the last month has exceeded its own outdoings, though the town is very empty. It will be quite so to-morrow, for Newmarket begins, or rather the youth adjourned thither. After that they will have two or three months of repose; but if they are not severely blooded and blistered, there will be no alteration. Their pleasures are no more entertaining to others, than delightful to themselves; one is tired of asking every day, who has won or lost? and even the portentous sums they lose, cease to make impression. One of them has committed a murder, and intends to repeat it. He betted 1500*l.* that a man could live twelve hours under water; hired a desperate fellow, sunk him in a ship, by way of experiment, and both ship and man have not appeared since. Another man and ship are to be tried for their lives, instead of Mr. Blake, the assassin.

Christina, Duchess of Kingston, is arrived, in a great fright, I believe, for the Duke's nephews are going to prove her first marriage, and hope to set the Will aside. It is pity her friendship with the Pope had not begun earlier; he might have given her a dispensation. If she loses her cause, the best thing he can do, will be to give her the veil.

I am sorry all Europe will not furnish me with another paragraph. Africa is, indeed, coming into fashion. There is just returned a Mr. Bruce, who has lived three years in the Court of Abyssinia, and breakfasted every morning with the Maids of Honour on live oxen. Otaheite and Mr. Banks are quite forgotten; but Mr. Blake,* I suppose, will order a live sheep for supper at Almack's, and ask whom he shall help to a piece of the shoulder. Oh yes; we shall have negro butchers, and French cooks will be laid aside. My Lady Townshend, after the rebellion, said, every body were so bloodthirsty, that she did not dare to dine abroad, for fear of meeting with a rebel-pye—now one shall be asked to come and eat a bit of raw mutton. In truth, I do think we are ripe for any extravagance.

* Who betted on the man's living under water twelve hours.

I am not wise enough to wish the world reasonable—I only desire to have follies that are amusing, and am sorry Cervantes laughed chivalry out of fashion. Adieu!

LETTER CCXXII.

Arlington Street, Aug. 3, 1774.

I TOLD you in my last that her Grace of Kingston was arrived. Had I written it four-and-twenty hours later, I might have told you she was gone again, with much precipitation, and with none of the pomp of her usual progresses. In short, she had missed her lawyer's letters, which warned her against returning. A prosecution for bigamy was ready to meet her. She decamped in the middle of the night; and six hours after, the officers of justice were at her door to seize her. This is but an unheroic catastrophe of her romance; and though she is as thorough a comedian as Sixtus Quintus, it would be a little awkward to take possession of his villa after being burnt in the hand. What will be the issue of the suit and law-suit I cannot tell. As so vast an estate is the prize, the lawyers will probably protract it beyond this century. Her friend the Electress of Saxony said to the Duke of Gloucester, "Poor thing! what could she do; she was so young when she was first married?"

Lady Holland is dead—just three weeks after her Lord. She has cleared all the debts of her two elder sons; the eldest has a large fortune, and Charles a decent beginning of another; though it may not last a-night, if he chooses to make it a codicil to all he has lost, and scorns to be indebted to any thing but his own parts for his elevation.

Lord Thomand* is dead too; and though possessed of nearly ten thousand a-year, and fifty thousand in money, nay, though he has long expected to die suddenly, and at the same age with his grandfather, father, and brother, as he has done, he could not bring himself to make a will, and the whole real estate falls to his nephew Lord Egremont.

These are all events of this inactive summer; and I chose this small paper, as abundantly large enough to contain them. Nay, I do not see how I shall reach its third page.

I find that in France, they are persuaded the old Parliament will be restored. The Dukes of Orleans and Chartres are again forbidden the Court for refusing to assist at the *catafalque* of the late King, where they must have saluted the new Parliament: yet this is not thought a disgrace. Monsieur de Boines is removed for a Monsieur Turgot. I see, however, that the old spirit remains at least in one quarter, and that they continue butchering the poor Corsicans. Is it

* Percy Winkham O'Brien, Earl of Thomond, second son of Sir William Windham, and younger brother of Charles Earl of Egremont.

true, that the King of Sardinia is to have that island? How unfortunate it is that little countries should retain a spirit of independence, which they have not strength to preserve; and that great nations, who might throw it off, court the yoke!

4th.

Oh! my dear sir, what a heartfelt pleasure I have had this moment! I have been to Mr. Croft's to see your picture. It brought the tears into my eyes: though thirty years have fattened you, made you florid, I traced every feature, and saw the whole likeness in the character and countenance—yes, there is all your goodness. I admire the art of the painter too; there is harmony in the tone, and though he has given you an Adonis-wig, which we should not think adapted to your age, he has managed it so as to have no juvenile air, but to harmonize in the utmost propriety with the decency of the ministerial composure. In short, as I did once before, I wanted to seize it for my own—but no! it will go to Linton, and I hope remain there for ages—which would not, I suppose, be its fate at Strawberry; that poor bauble will probably be condemned and pulled to pieces by whomever I shall give it to.* Our living deeds create no gratitude; can we expect our affection expressed in a last Will should make stronger impressions?

Mr. Croft showed me a letter from you on Birmingham covers for dishes. He has written, but received no answer. I told him I would advise you against them. All plated silver wears abominably, and turns to brass, like the age. You would not bear it six months. He told me that your nephew Horace is on the road to you: how glad I am! what joy to embrace dear Gal.'s son! I think I have seen too many bad hearts in the countenance, not to know when I see a good one; yes, yes, you will find Gal. and yourself in your nephew. I am as sure there is goodness in his heart, as I am that there is sense in his head, and quickness in his parts. I was charmed with him last year; and don't fancy it is partiality if you think so too the first minute you see him. Certain characters strike fire from each other.

The King of Prussia has been amazingly gracious to General Conway, and ordered him to attend him to all his reviews. This is most astonishing favour to an Englishman. For my part, I am sorry; I had rather such virtue had been marked by his frown. *There are many Marius's in that Cæsar*, a quotation you will not suspect me of intending for a compliment! Adieu!

* By the care he took, in his testamentary dispositions, to avoid this dispersion, one may hope he did not, at the time, altogether believe in his own prediction; which, however, was verified within forty years of his death.—Ed.

LETTER CCXXIII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 2, 1774.

You think I write seldom, my dear sir, but how can I help it? Not seldomer, I hope, than in other peaceful summers. In vacations of London and Parliament, little happens weighty enough to bear so long a journey. This season has been singularly barren. Perhaps events may thicken, which, prosperous or not, are equally propitious to correspondences. The scene in America, they say, grows very gloomy; Cæsar* frowns on the Elector of Hanover; but I know neither Atlantic nor German politics. *You* tell me what the Turks and Russians are to do next, but before I received your letter, I could have told you that they have agreed to do nothing more—which is much about what they have been doing all the war. Well, still one has something to live upon. The King of France has at last spoken out; both the Chancellor and Terray† are banished, and the old Parliament restored, or to be restored. As little as I care about the revolutions of the great planets, I am mightily pleased with this convulsion. I like old constitutions recovering themselves; and I abhorred the Chancellor, a consummate villain, who would have served Alexander VI. and Cæsar Borgia too, and wished no better than to have restored St. Ignatius and St. Nero. This young King is exceedingly in my good graces; and may gain my whole heart whenever he pleases, if he will but release Madame du Barri, for, though the tool of a vile faction, I would not be angry with a street-walker; nor make no difference between Thais and Fredegonde; between Con. Philips and the Czarina.

By the way, one hears no more of my friend Pugatscheff; yet perhaps he contributed to this peace. It is now part of my plan that the King of France should dethrone that woman, and their Majesties of Prussia and Sweden, and restore Corsica—not to the Genoese, but to themselves. You may think all this a great deal, but it is not a quarter so difficult as conquering one's-self, and relinquishing despotism. It is a greater victory to make happy than miserable; but then what glorious rewards! Think, how contemptible the end of Louis the well-beloved, how bright the dawn of Louis XVI.! Can any power taste so sweet as this single word on the statue of Henri Quatre, *Resurrexit?* And then, what a blessed retirement the Chancellor's! How he must enjoy himself, when the loss of power is sweetened with the curses of a whole nation, who have not cursed him in vain! My whole heart makes a bonfire on this occasion. What a century, which sees the Jesuits annihilated, and absolute powder relinquished! I begin to believe in the Millenium, when the just shall reign on earth. I scorn to say a word more, or profane such a subject with heathen topics. Adieu!

* The Emperor disagreeing with the King on German politics.
† The Abbé du Terry, Controller General of the Finances.

P.S. My affection for your concerns betrays me into a weakness; I cannot help being so irreligious as to tell you, that you are to have a new neighbour, though not very soon; Lord Carlisle is to succeed Mr. Lynch at Turin.

LETTER CCXXIV.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 6, 1774.

It would be unlike my attention and punctuality, to see so large an event as an irregular dissolution of Parliament, without taking any notice of it to you. It happened last Saturday, six months before its natural death, and without the design being known but the Tuesday before, and that by very few persons. The chief motive is supposed to be the ugly state of North America, and the effects that a cross winter might have on the next elections. Whatever were the causes, the first consequences, as you may guess, were such a ferment in London as is seldom seen at this dead season of the year. Couriers, despatches, post-chaises, post-horses, hurrying every way! Sixty messengers passed through one single turnpike on Friday. The whole island is by this time in equal agitation; but less wine and money will be shed than have been at any such period for these fifty years.

We have a new famous bill, devised by the late Mr. Grenville, that has its first operation now; and what changes it may occasion, no body can yet foresee. The first symptoms are not favourable to the Court; the great towns are casting off submission, and declaring for popular members. London, Westminster, Middlesex, seem to have no monarch but Wilkes, who is at the same time pushing for the mayoralty of London, with hitherto a majority on the poll. It is strange how this man, like a phœnix, always revives from his embers! America, I doubt, is still more unpromising. There are whispers of their having assembled an armed force, and of earnest supplications arrived for succours of men and ships. A civil war is no trifle; and how we are to suppress or pursue in such a vast region, with a handful of men, I am not an Alexander to guess; and for the fleet, can we put it upon casters and wheel it from Hudson's Bay to Florida? But I am an ignorant soul, and neither pretend to knowledge nor foreknowledge. All I perceive already is, that our Parliaments are subjected to America and India, and must be influenced by their politics; yet I do not believe our senators are more universal than formerly.

It would be quite unfashionable to talk longer of any thing but elections; and yet it is the topic on which I never talk or think, especially since *I took up my freedom.** In one light I can speak of them. The whole world has been so good for these six months as to be-

* His quitting Parliament.

lieve my nephew quite in his senses. It was very far from being my opinion. You shall judge yourself. Lady Orford had given him power over her boroughs. The moment her agent heard of the dissolution, he sent two expresses, one after the other, to my lord. He has not deigned to send any answer or give any orders, except despatching Mr. Skreene to one of them. Mr. Boone, his candidate for the other, is in bed with the gout; and though there is a clear majority of three voices at one, Mr. Sharpe thinks he will lose both by his improvidence.

In the midst of this combustion, we are in perils by land and water. It has rained for this month without intermission; there is a sea between me and Richmond, and Sunday was se'nnight I was hurried down to Isleworth in the ferry-boat by the violence of the current, and had great difficulty to get to shore. Our roads are so infested by highwaymen, that it is dangerous stirring out almost by day. Lady Hertford was attacked on Hounslow Heath at three in the afternoon. Dr. Eliot was shot at three days ago, without having resisted; and the day before yesterday, we were near losing our Prime Minister, Lord North; the robbers shot at the postilion, and wounded the latter. In short, all the freebooters, that are not in India, have taken to the highway. The Ladies of the Bed-chamber dare not go to the Queen at Kew in an evening. The lane between me and the Thames is the only safe road I know at present, for it is up to the middle of the horses in water. Next week I shall not venture to London even at noon, for the Middlesex election is to be at Brentford, where the two demagogues, Wilkes and Townshend, oppose each other; and at Richmond there is no crossing the river. How strange all this must appear to you Florentines; but you may turn to your Machiavelli and Guicciardini, and have some idea of it. I am the quietest man at present in the whole island; not but I might take some part, if I would. I was in my garden yesterday, seeing my servants lop some trees; my brewer walked in and pressed me to go to Guildhall for the nomination of members for the county. I replied, calmly, "Sir, when I would go no more to my own election, you may be very sure I will go to that of nobody else." My old tune is,

Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis, &c.

Adieu!

P.S. Arlington Street, 7th.

I am just come to town, and find your letter, with the notification of Lord Cowper's marriage; I recollect that I ought to be sorry for it, as you will probably lose an old friend. The approaching death of the Pope will be an event of no consequence. That old mummery is near its conclusion, at least as a political object. The history of the latter Popes will be no more read than that of the last Constantinopolitan Emperors. Wilkes is a more conspicuous personage in modern story than the Pontifex Maximus of Rome. The poll for Lord Mayor

ended last night; he and his late Mayor had above 1900 votes, and their antagonists not 1500. It is strange that the more he is opposed, the more he succeeds!

I don't know whether Sir W. Duncan's marriage proved Platonic or not; but I cannot believe that a lady of great birth,* and greater pride, quarrels with her family, to marry a Scotch physician for Platonic love, which she might enjoy without marriage. I remember an admirable *bon-mot* of George Selwyn; who said, "How often Lady Mary will repeat, with Macbeth, 'Wake, Duncan, with this knocking —would thou couldst!'"

LETTER CCXXV.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 22, 1774.

Though I have been writing two letters, of four sides each, one of which I enclose, I must answer your two last, if my fingers will move; and talk to you on the contents of the enclosed.

If the Jesuits have precipitated the Pope's death,† as seems more than probable, they have acted more by the spirit of their order, than by its good sense. Great crimes may raise a growing cause, but seldom retard the fall of a sinking one. This I take to be almost an infallible maxim. Great crimes, too, provoke more than they terrify; and there is no poisoning all that are provoked, and all that are terrified; who alternately provoke and terrify each other, till common danger produces common security. The Bourbon Monarchs will be both angry and frightened, the Cardinals frightened. It will be the interest of both not to revive an order that bullies with arsenic in its sleeve. The poisoned host will destroy the Jesuits, as well as the Pope: and perhaps the Church of Rome will fall by a wafer, as it rose by it; for such an edifice will tumble when once the crack is begun.

Our elections are almost over. Wilkes has taken possession of Middlesex without an enemy appearing against him; and, being as puissant a monarch as Henry the Eighth, and as little scrupulous, should, like him, date his acts *From our Palace of Bridewell, in the tenth year of our reign.* He has, however, met with a heroine to stem the tide of his conquests; who, though not of Arc, nor a *pucelle*, is a true *Joan* in spirit, style, and manners. This is her Grace of Northumberland;‡ who has carried the mob of Westminster from him; sitting daily in the midst of Covent-garden; and will elect her son§ and Lord Thomas Clinton,‖ against Wilkes's two candidates, Lord Mahon¶ and Lord Mountmorris. She puts me in mind of what

* Lady Mary Tufton, sister of the Earl of Thanet.
† Benedict XIV. Ganganelli.
‡ Lady Elizabeth Seymour. § Earl Percy.
‖ Second son of Henry Duke of Newcastle.
¶ Only son of Earl Stanhope.

Charles the second said of a foolish preacher, who was very popular in his parish: "I suppose his nonsense suits their nonsense."

Let me sweeten my letter by making you smile. A quaker has been at Versailles; and wanted to see the Comtes de Provence and D'Artois dine in public, but would not submit to pull off his hat. The Princes were told of it; and not only admitted him with his beaver on, but made him sit down and dine with them. Was it not very sensible and good-humoured? You and I know one who would not have been so gracious: I do not mean my nephew Lord Cholmondeley.* Adieu! I am tired to death.

P.S. I have seen the Duchess of Beaufort; who sings your praises quite in a tune I like. Her manner is much unpinioned to what it was, though her person remains as stately as ever; and powder is vastly preferable to those brown hairs, of whose preservation she was so fond. I am not so struck with the beauty of Lady Mary† as I was three years ago. Your nephew, Sir Horace, I see, by the papers, is come into Parliament: I am glad of it. Is not he yet arrived at Florence?

LETTER CCXXVI.

Strawberry Hill. Nov. 11, 1774.

I HAVE very little to tell you. Every day may bring us critical news from America, which will give the chief colour to the winter. I am in perfect ignorance of the situation of affairs there. I live quietly here, unconnected with all factions, enjoying the delightful place I have made, and even enjoying my old age, since the gout keeps away. The bitterness of the last fit, succeeded by my stewardship, gives a flavour to my tranquillity that, perhaps, I should not taste so much, if I had not lost it for nearly a year and a half. I propose to be little absent hence till after Christmas, a longer stay than I ever made in the country; but what can I see in London that I have not seen fifty times over? There is a new race, indeed, but does it promise to make the times more agreeable? Does the world talk of our orators, poets, or wits? Oh, no! It talks of vast fortunes made, or vast fortunes lost at play! It talks of Wilkes at the top of the wheel, and of Charles Fox at the bottom: all between is a blank.

It is not much better any where else. The King of Prussia, the hero of the last war, has only been a pick-pocket in Poland. The Austrian and Russian eagles have turned vultures, and preyed on desolated campaigns. The Turkish war ended one don't know how without any singal action. France has been making Parliaments cross over and figure-in, and yet without the scene being at all amusing. For my part, I take Europe to be worn out. When Vol-

* He means the Duke of Gloucester.

† Lady Mary Somerset, youngest daughter of Charles Noel, Duke of Beaufort. She was afterwards married to the Duke of Rutland.

taire dies, we may say, "Good night!" I don't believe this age will be more read than the Byzantine historians.

The bigamist Duchess* is likely to become a real peeress at last. Lord Bristol† has been struck with a palsy that has taken away the use of all his limbs. If he dies, and Augustus should take a fancy to marry again, as two or three years ago he had a mind to do, his next brother, the Bishop,‡ may happen to assist the Duke of Kingston's relations with additional proofs of the first marriage. They now think they shall be able to intercept the receipt of the Duke's estate; but law is a horrid liar, and I never believe a word it says before the decision.

Nov. 14th.

There are advices from America that are said to be extremely bad: I don't know the particulars; but I have never augured well of that dispute! I fear we neither know how to proceed or retreat! I believe this is the case with many individuals, as well as with the public. Within this week we have had two deaths out of the common course Bradshaw,§ a man well known of late, but in a more silent way than for his *fame* to have reached you, shot himself yesterday se'nnight. His beginning was very obscure; when he grew more known, it was not to his honour. He has since been a very active Minister, of the second or third class, and more trusted, perhaps, than some of a higher class. Instead of making a great fortune, he had spent one, and could not go on a week longer. The Duke of Athol is dead as suddenly; drowned certainly; whether delirious from a fever or from some disappointment, is not clear. Two evenings ago Lord Berkeley shot a highwayman; in short, frenzy is at work from top to bottom, and I doubt we shall, not be cool till there has been a good deal of blood let. You and I shall, probably not see the subsiding of the storm, if the humours do boil over; and can a nation be in a high fever without a crisis? I see the patients; I do not see the doctors. Adieu!

LETTER CCXXVII.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 24, 1774.

I THANK you, my dear sir, for your news of the Conclave and of the Duchess‖ and her ship-load of plunder. If the captain carries

* Eliz. Chudleigh, married to the Duke of Kingston, though her husband, Augustus Hervey, was living.

† George William, second Earl of Bristol.

‡ Frederic Hervey, Bishop of Derry, who became Earl of Bristol after his brothers, George and Augustus.

§ Secretary of the Treasury.

‖ The Duchess of Kingston.

it off, it will be but an episode well suited to the history. I shall like a continuation of both subjects.

As you only say that you mentioned a certain election to the Countess,* I conclude you had not yet received my letter for her. The interlude of Macreth† has given so much offence, that, after having run the gauntlet, he has been persuaded to be modest and give up his seat. I should not say *give*, but sell it. I do not believe that the buyer will be much more creditable; but, happily, I am free from all this disgraceful transaction.

A great event happened two days ago—a political and moral event! the sudden death of that second Kouli Khan, Lord Clive. There was certainly illness in the case; the world thinks more than illness. His constitution was exceedingly broken and disordered, and grown subject to violent pains and convulsions. He came unexpectedly to town last Monday, and they say, ill. On Tuesday his physician gave him a dose of laudanum, which had not the desired effect. On the rest, there are two stories; one, that the physician repeated the dose; the other, that he doubled it himself, contrary to advice. In short, he has terminated at fifty a life of so much glory, reproach, art, wealth, and ostentation! He had just named ten members for the new Parliament.

Next Tuesday that Parliament is to meet—and a deep game it has to play! few Parliaments a greater. The world is in amaze here that no account is arrived from America of the result of their General Congress—if any is come it is very secret, and that has no favourable aspect. The combination and spirit there seem to be universal, and is very alarming. I am the humble servant of events, and you know never meddle with prophecy. It would be difficult to descry good omens, be the issue what it will.

The old French Parliament is restored with great *éclat*. Monsieur de Maurepas, author of the revolution, was received one night at the Opera with boundless shouts of applause. It is even said that the mob intended, that the King should go to hold the *lit de justice*, to draw his coach. How singular it would be if Wilkes's case should be copied for a King of France! Do you think Rousseau was in the right, when he said that he could tell what would be the manners of any capital city, from certain given lights? I don't know what he may do in Constantinople and Pekin—but Paris and London! I don't believe Voltaire likes these changes. I have seen nothing of his writing for many months; not even on the poisoning Jesuits.‡ For our part, I repeat it, we shall contribute nothing to the *Histoire des Mœurs*, not for want of materials, but for want of writers. We have comedies without novelty, gross satires without

* Countess Orford, living at Florence.

† Robert Macreth. He had been a waiter at White's. Lord Orford, having borrowed money of him, brought him into Parliament for his borough of Castle Rising; and, to excuse it, pretended that his mother, Lady Orford, who knew nothing of it, borrowed the money.

‡ They poisoned Pope Ganganelli.

stings, metaphysical eloquence, and antiquarians that discover nothing.

Boeotiûm in crasso jurares aere natos!

Don't tell me I am grown old and peevish and supercilious—name the geniuses of 1774, and I submit. The next Augustan age will dawn on the other side of the Atlantic. There will, perhaps, be a Thucydides at Boston, a Xenophon at New York, and, in time, a Virgil at Mexico, and a Newton at Peru. At last, some curious traveller from Lima will visit England and give a description of the ruins of St. Paul's, like the editions of Balbec and Palmyra; but am I not prophesying, contrary to my consummate prudence, and casting horoscopes of empires like Rousseau? Yes: well, I will go and dream of my visions.

P.S. 29th.

The Ecclesiastical Court, I hear, has decided, and will pronounce, that the person commonly called Duchess of Kingston, is a certain Mrs. Hervey. The new Lord Holland* is dead—stay; you must not believe a word I tell you. Truth in this climate won't keep sweet four-and-twenty hours. Lord Bristol says, nothing can be done against the Duchess of Kingston.

The Parliament opened just now—they say the speech talks of the *rebellion* of the Province of Massachusetts; but if *they-say* tells a lie, I wash my hands of it. As your gazetteer, I am obliged to send you all news, true or false. I have believed and unbelieved every thing I have heard since I came to town. Lord Clive has died every death in the parish register; at present it is most fashionable to believe he cut his throat. That he is dead, is certain; so is Lord Holland—and so is not the Bishop of Worcester; however, to show you that I am at least as well-informed as greater personages, the bishoprick was on Saturday given to Lord North's brother—so for once the Irishman was in the right, and a pigeon, at least a dove, can be in two places at once.

LETTER CCXXVIII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 9, 1775.

I WRITE without having any thing to say, but what I know you will like better than news. I am quite recovered of the gout, except in the hand I write with, and which you see cannot be very bad. The bootikins have proved themselves to demonstration. I had the gout in both hands, both feet, both elbows, and one wrist, and yet

* Stephen Fox, second Lord Holland.

could walk without a stick in less than a month, and have been abroad twice in less than five weeks. It came in each part as rapidly as it could, and went away so too; and though I had some acute pain, much less in quantity than in any fit these ten years. Now, if less pain, and five weeks instead of five months and a-half, as the last fit was, be not demonstration, there is none in Euclid.

The bootikins do not cure the gout, but if they defer it, lessen it, shorten it, who would not wear them? Why, fine people, younger people, who will not condescend to lie like a mummy; nay, nor any body else, for the physicians and apothecaries, who began by recommending them, now, finding they are a specific, cry them down—and will be believed, precisely because they lie; they say they weaken; it is false; I can at this moment stamp on the marble hearth with both feet with no more inconvenience than I did at five-and-twenty, which I never saw one other person that could do, who had the gout a twelvemonth before. I do this ten times a-day, to convince people; yet, what is ocular proof against the assertion of a grave face and a tied wig? If weakness were the consequence, who would be weakened so soon as I, who have bones no bigger than a lark's? I want to send you a cargo of bootikins; tell me the shortest way of conveying them. Your brother is one of the bigoted infidels; can one wonder that the three professions make so many dupes, when pain cannot open the understanding? Sure the Devil's three names of Satan, Beelzebub, and Lucifer, were given to him in his three capacities of priest, physician, and lawyer! It is certainly true that there are apothecaries in London who have given noxious drugs under the name of James's powders, to decry the latter. I did not think there could be a *trade* so bad as a *profession*, till I heard that the fishmongers in town here, fling away great quantities of fish that it may never be cheap. What a wicked monster is a great metropolis!

I rejoice that you have resolved to avow your *nepotism:* it may be a bar to your obtaining the Papacy, but sounds well in this Protestant country, and I am sure will turn out to your mind's satisfaction, though it may be a little interruption to your quiet.

This is a short letter, but I call it an intercalated one. There will probably be enough, and too much to send you soon—but till the Parliament meets, all is suspense! I hope decision will not follow *in haste!* The moment is very big; and if any body is wise enough to see a quick solution of all the difficulties, they are much more intuitive than my comprehension.

Lord Lincoln* marries my cousin, Lady Frances Conway;† she is a sweet young woman in person, temper, and understanding, and deserves such vast fortune. Adieu!

* Eldest son of Henry Clinton, Duke of Newcastle.

† Fourth daughter of Francis Seymour Conway, Earl of Hertford, nephew of Catherine Shorter Lady Walpole, first wife of Sir Robert.

LETTER CCXXIX.

Arlington Street, Jan. 25, 1775.

The Duke of Gloucester is very ill. Had I begun my letter last night, I should have said, extremely ill. It was reported and believed that he was dead; but he slept eight hours last night, and his pulse was better this morning. The physicians, who gave no hopes yesterday, say to-night, that they never saw any mortal symptoms. Be assured they speak as little truth of the past as they know of what is to come. The Duke has been declining this month; and he was ordered to go abroad immediately, but delayed—and now is not able to go. I hope in God he will get strength enough—I wish him abroad for every reason. The other Duke his brother, has erected his standard in opposition, and though the Duke of Gloucester is too wise, I trust, to take such a part, he would be teased to death with the politics of the Lutterels, and had better be out of the way.

The times are indeed very serious. Pacification with America is not the measure adopted. More regiments are ordered thither, and to-morrow a plan, I fear equivalent to a declaration of war, is to be laid before both Houses. They are bold Ministers, methinks, who do not hesitate on a civil war, in which victory may bring ruin, and disappointment endanger their heads. Lord Chatham has already spoken out: and though his outset [a motion in the Lords last Friday] was neither wise nor successful, he will certainly be popular again with the clamorous side, which no doubt will become the popular side too, for all wars are costly, and consequently grievous. Acquisition alone can make those burdens palatable; and in a war with our own colonies we must afflict instead of acquiring them, and cannot recover them without having undone them. I am still to learn wisdom and experience, if these things are not so.

I thank you much for the opera of the Conclave. It loses greatly of its spirit by my unacquaintance with the *dramatis personæ*. By the duration of the interregnum, I suppose there is a difficulty of choosing between the Crowns and the Jesuits; and the Cardinals more afraid of poison from the latter, than of the menaces of the former. Though old folks are not less ambitious than young, they have greater aversion to arsenic. But seriously, is it not amazing that the Jesuits can still exist, when their last crime* was sufficient to have drawn down vengeance on them, if they had not been proscribed before?

We have no news of ordinary calibre; but perhaps I grow too old to learn the lesser anecdotes of the town. I scarce ever go to public places, and live only with people who have turned the corner of adventures. Indeed in this country, there is something so singu-

* Of poisoning Pope Ganganelli.

lar and so new in most characters, that all the world hears the history of the most remarkable performers. The winter is young yet; I dare to say it will not long be barren.

27th.

The Duke of Gloucester, I hope is out of danger; I mean for the present. It is a constitution that will always give alarms; it has radical evils, and yet amazing stamina. As to the physicians, I do not mind a syllable they say. On Saturday they were very proud of a discovery—they had now found out his distemper, and it was a new one; he had two shivering fits, and so there was matter forming. This mighty discovery, which only authenticated their former ignorance, proves to be a new blunder. On Tuesday they gave the Duchess no hopes at all, and on Wednesday night they recollected that his Royal Highness had had no mortal symptom—for they have no shivering fit of shame. They now talk of his going abroad in April; I wish it much sooner. In short, I am very impatient, both for his health, and other reasons. He will take the Duchess and his daughters, and go no farther than the south of France. That is an answer to a question* you have not asked. His mind will be more at peace, and he will be free from all who would disturb it for their own ends. The Lutterels are every day, I believe, writing impertinent paragraphs in the newspapers, as if in behalf of the Duke of Gloucester, which only tends to incense the King against him, that they may involve him in their own views; but he knows it, and will not be their dupe. Adieu!

P.S. I forgot to tell you that the town of Birmingham has petitioned the Parliament to enforce the American acts, that is, make war; for they have a manufacture of swords and muskets. I believe the Dutch will petition too, for much such a reason!

LETTER CCXXX.

Arlington Street, Feb. 15, 1775.

You have been made easy long ago, I hope, about my gout, and have restored your good opinion to the bootikins, which reduced it to so short a fit. *They could* not give you an inflammation and swelling; they probably prevented its being worse. It is still more idle when people say they weaken—who was ever *not* weak after the gout! I, who am *naturally* weaker than any body, recover my feet so much that I can stamp on marble with all my force, which I never saw a gouty person besides able to do. Be assured that the physicians have set about that nonsensical notion of weakening, only because the bootikins do the contrary. I complained of weakness

* Whether he will go to Italy.

on my breast, of which I complained thirty years before I ever felt the gout, and the apothecary shook his head, like a knave as he was, and said, he had feared they would have that effect. He had never thought so, and if he had, ought to have warned me; but I believe no limb of the faculty ever laid in ambush to intercept and cut off an illness to come. If you still feel weakness, you must not wonder; the bootikins cannot make us young again. I totter as I go down stairs—but I trust I shall never totter so much as to believe in any faculty. Fools and knaves hoodwink common sense, and if it were not like insects, of which no species can be exterminated, it would not exist upon earth.

The war with our colonies, which is now declared, is a proof how much influence jargon has on human actions. A war on our own trade is *popular!* Both houses are as eager for it as they were for conquering the Indies—which acquits them a little of rapine, when they are as glad of what will impoverish them as of what they fancied was to enrich them—so like are the great vulgar, and the small. Are not you foreigners amazed? We are raising soldiers and seamen—so are the Americans; and, unluckily, can find a troop as easily as we a trooper. But we are above descending to calculation: one would think the whole legislature were of the club at Almack's, and imagined, like Charles Fox, that our fame was to rise in proportion to our losses. It is more extraordinary that Charles does not adopt their system, as they have copied his, but opposes them, and proposes to make his fortune when they are bankrupt. In the mean time bad news pours in from America. I do not believe all I hear—but fear I shall believe a great deal in spite of my teeth.

Another of your diplomatic brethren is become your brother in the Bath—Gordon, of Brussels. He is a fool for a comedy. We have no other news, nor think of any thing that is not beyond the Atlantic. You are strangely old-fashioned to trouble your head about the Conclave; we care as much about the Caliphs of Bagdad.

I misinformed you when I said that the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester had no thoughts of Italy; they proposed passing next winter at Rome, but will not stop any where else. I say, this is their scheme, and wish it may be executed;—but am far from having any sanguine hopes about his Royal Highness. He does not mend; his cough is very bad, and I think he falls away. He will not leave England till April, because he will inoculate his children before he carries them abroad. I tremble at the delay, and have said all I dare to the duchess against it, as I am impatient to have him set out, and think no time should be lost.

LETTER CCXXXI.

Arlington Street, March 20, 1775.

I HAVE not written to you this month, I know: no symptom of negligence, but from want of matter. You will say, perhaps, "but there have been many long days in Parliament:" very true; but long days make small sensation, when the majorities are very great, and always on the same side. The Houses go on fulminating against America; we shall see whether their edicts are regarded, or rather, their troops and generals. The province of New York seems to be better disposed than the other colonies; but we must wait for the re-echo of our new acts, and for the Congress in May. In three months we shall hear whether it will be war or peace. The nation will stare a little if it is the former. It is little expected, and less thought of. We are given up to profusion, extravagance, and pleasure: heroism is not at all in fashion. Cincinnatus will be found at the hazard-table, and Camillus at a ball. The vivacity of the young Queen of France has reached hither. Our young ladies are covered with more plumes than any nation that has no other covering. The first people of fashion are going to act plays, in which comedians, singers, dancers, figurantes, might all walk at a coronation. The summer is to open with a masquerade on the Thames. I am glad the American enthusiasts are so far off; I don't think we should be a match for them. We want more Indies; we cannot afford to lose any.

So you have chosen a Pope! Which will he fear most, France and Spain, or poison?

The Duke of Gloucester has lost his second daughter; both were inoculated, that he might carry them abroad. The youngest was very unhealthy, and died the next day after the disorder appeared; the other, on whom he doats, will do well. He is far from being so himself; coughs, and falls away. I hope a better climate will save him.

I am wishing for summer; not to go on the water in mask, but to escape from this scene of diversions. I mix in them as little as I can; they suit neither my age nor inclination. For some years I have loved the month of June, when I and all the town, for we all live together, I think, are to part.

I just now hear that Lord Bristol* is dead at the Bath. He was born to the gout from his mother's family, but starved himself to keep it off. This brought on paralytic strokes, which have despatched him. Will her Grace of Kingston now pass eldest, and condescend to be, as she really is, Countess of Bristol? or will she come over and take her trial for the becoming dignity of the exhibition in Westminster Hall? How it would sound, "Elizabeth, Coun-

* George William Hervey, second Earl of Bristol.

tess of Bristol, alias Duchess of Kingston, come into Court!" I can tell you nothing more extraordinary, nor would any history figure near hers. It shows genius to strike out any thing so new as her achievements. Though we have many uncommon personages, it is not easy for them to be superiorly particular. Adieu!

LETTER CCXXXII.

Strawberry Hill, April 17, 1775.

It is more equitable to suppose that my conception is worn out, than that the world wants events. I tell you of a nation of madmen, and yet want instances. It is certain, both that we do not grow sage, and that I have nothing to say. The town is divided into two great classes, the politicians and the pleasurists. The first are occupied with that vast fœtus, the American contest; and wars at that distance do not go on expeditiously. Wilkes has arrived at his *ne plus ultra;* he has presented a remonstrance in form to the Throne; and, with the magnanimity of an Alexander, used his triumph with moderation—in modern language, with good breeding. The younger generation game, dress, dance, go to Newmarket. Some of them, not juniors all, learn to sing. Cortez was victorious in our last opera, Montezuma. I doubt the Americans will not be vanquished in recitative.

The cause of M. de Guisnes is still going on. The publications would fill a whole shelf. The Duc d'Aiguillon has, in self-defence, sent forth their correspondence. I have not read it yet; he will find it difficult to appear white in my eyes.

Lady Gertrude Hotham, (Lord Chesterfield's sister,) one of the few whom perhaps you remember, is dead; she set her ruffle, and thence the rest of her dress on fire, and died of it in ten days. She had wit like all her brothers, but for many years had been a Methodist. About two years ago, as the Earl was ill, she went with her Primate, Lady Huntingdon,* to try to tempt him to one of their seminaries in Wales, hoping to get at his soul by a cranny in his health. They extolled the prospects, and then there were such charming mountains! "Hold, ladies," said he: "I don't love mountains,—when your Ladyship's faith has removed the mountains, I will go thither with all my heart!" What pity there is nothing of that wit in his letters!

Is it possible this is all I should have to tell you after a month's silence? 'Tis well I have made it a rule to be punctual; how natural to wait till something should happen, if I were not a prodigy of regularity! I am here alone, courting a coy spring, who sends me a cross answer by an east wind, and am forced to content myself with the old housekeeper, a fire. I have books, and prints, and playthings,

* Lady Selina Shirley, Countess Dowager of Huntingdon.

and the time passes agreeably, but will not do to relate. Your letters will be particularly acceptable, when you have got your nephew —not that nephews are charming things, but I am sure you will like yours, though you must allow for a vast difference in your ideas. You have been forty years out of England, and can have but a very faint image of what it is now. You have seen nothing but raw boys and rawer governors. Your nephew has just lived long enough to be formed on the present scale; at Florence one may subsist for a century on the same way of thinking. He has drops of your and his father's blood, that is, gentle, humane feelings. Talk to his heart, not to his language. In short, think that any thing you see, and do not approve, is the growth of the age, and not peculiar to him. When you discover his father, be sure it is his own. Believe me, I found him so preferable to his contemporaries, that I loved him. Adieu!

Arlington Street, April 22.

This letter would have set out yesterday if I had come to town, as I intended: now it cannot depart till Tuesday; and for any thing it contains, will arrive time enough. Yours of the 8th met me here, and seems to complain of my long silence. The beginning of my letter shows I was conscious it was time to write—and yet I am not aware that I have ever exceeded the interval of a month; and am never so long without writing, if any thing material happens.

I dined to-day at the Exhibition of Pictures, with the Royal Academicians. We do not beat Titian, or Guido yet. Zoffani has sent over a wretched Holy Family. What is he doing? Does he return, or go to Russia, as they say? He is the Hogarth of Dutch painting, but, no more than Hogarth, can shine out of his own way. He might have drawn the "Holy Family" well, if he had seen them *in statu quo*. Sir Joshua Reynolds is a great painter, but, unfortunately, his colours seldom stand longer than crayons. We have a Swede, one Loutherbourg, who would paint landscape and cattle excellently if he did not in every picture indulge some one colour inordinately. Horse, dogs, and animals we paint admirably, and a few landscapes well. The prices of all are outrageous, and the numbers of professors still greater. We have an American, West, who deals in high history, and is vastly admired, but he is heavier than Guercino, and has still less grace, and is very inferior. We have almost a statuary or two, and very good architects; but as Vanbrugh dealt in quarries, and Kent in lumber, Adam, our most admired, is all ginger-bread, filigraine, and fan-painting. Wyat, less fashionable, has as much taste, is grander, and more pure. We have private houses that cost more than the Palace Pitti.* Will you never come and see your fine country before it is undone?

* Palace of the Great Duke at Florence.

LETTER CCXXXIII.

Strawberry Hill, May 7, 1775.

METHINKS I am grown an uninteresting correspondent. Yet I know not how to help it. I never could *compose* letters; they were forced to write themselves, and live upon their daily bread. I have not only done with politics, but politics have done with themselves. They depend on Opposition, as a private dispute does—and there is scarce any such thing—I mean in these Islands. There is, indeed, beyond the seas an opposition, so big, that most folks call it a rebellion, which if computed by the tract of country it occupies, we, as so diminutive in comparison, ought rather to be called in rebellion to that. All the late letters thence are as hostile as possible; and, unless their heads are as cool as their hearts seem determined, it will not be long before we hear of the over-acts of war. Our three generals are sailed, and Gage will have a pretty large army. They say he is preparing to attack the American magazine. Our stake is deep, though, like other rebellions, this does not aim at the capital: yet it is that kind of war, in which even victory may ruin us. Some of your *corps diplomatique* menace us with the great armaments preparing in Spain, but the stocks, that are no heroes, do not seem to believe them; and I am too brave to be frightened before they are. I live a good deal here, and the Spaniards must be at Brentford before I shall make the militia of Twickenham turn out. The map of America I have forgotten, and cannot learn it again now, but leave it to a younger generation, whose business it will be.

I have outlived very nearly all the persons that were on the stage when I came into the world. My contemporaries seem going too. I have lost three of them very lately, Lady Milton,* General Boscawen,† and the Duchess of Montagu‡—I don't believe the latter's death has put the same thoughts into her widower's head as it has into mine: he will think of leaving a young duke, before he packs up. The Duchess has given 7000*l.* a-year to her daughter the Duchess of Buccleuch, and as much to the Duke of Montagu, yet only for his life, so perhaps she was not very desirous of his having a son and heir. Another of our number is dying, the Duchess of Northumberland. Her turtle will not be so impatient for a mate, as his§ patent does not enable him to beget Percys—a master or miss Smithson would sound like natural children.

* Lady Caroline Sackville, daughter of Lionel Duke of Dorset, and wife of Joseph Damer Lord Milton.

† Third son of Hugh, first Viscount Falmouth.

‡ Mary, second daughter of John second Duke of Montagu.

§ George Brudenel, Earl of Cardigan, husband of Lady Mary Montagu, one of the two co-heiresses of Duke John; and Sir Hugh Smithson, Earl of Northumberland, husband of Lady Elizabeth Seymour, sole heiress of Algernon Duke of Somerset, were to be created Dukes at the same time, but from the pretensions of their wives, George III.

The papers, my only informers, say your new Pope has opened the cage of the Jesuits, and let them fly. So has the King of France done for Madame du Barri. I suppose both will return to their former professions,—different kinds of intrigue. His Holiness, I suppose, was afraid of following his predecessor too soon.

The present session, say my oracles, is to end this month. So is the cause of Monsieur de Guisnes—it is time; the controversy amounts to many volumes, and exhausted my patience; I could not go through it. His adversary, I am told by those who have more phlegm, has lost all temper and discretion, abuses even his protectors, and the public, for being against him. This looks well for De Guisnes; if any thing can pay him for what he has undergone! What courage any man must have that supports a controversy! It is treating your enemies with every thing that can be said to your prejudice. How can one hate one enemy more than all?

As Strawberry furnishes so little, and this letter is not impatient to set out, I shall carry it to town, and keep it for more bulk. Yet I must commend myself a little first. I have finished this house and place these three years, and yet am content with and enjoy it—a very uncommon case in a country where nobody is pleased but while they are improving, and where they are tired the moment they have done. I choose my house should enjoy itself, which poor houses and gardens seldom do, for people go on mending till they die, and the next comer, who likes to improve too, begins to mend all that has been done. I knew what I wished; I have it, and am satisfied—and yet do not forget that I am one of my contemporaries! I have all my life been blessed with knowing my own mind. I never wished to be *any body*, that is, any thing; and when the moments have arrived in which I might have been what I pleased, I resisted them, and persisted in my nothinghood. I hated Parliament, resolved to quit it, and did: was told I should repent, but never have. There ends my panegyric on myself; and pray don't think it very high flown, when the sum of all is, that I am content with a small house and garden, and with being nobody.

LETTER CCXXXIV.

Strawberry Hill, May 17, 1775.

If you could not help writing, my dear sir, to tell me of your nephew's arrival, I can as little help wishing you joy of it, though I wrote to you but last week. I told you how pleased and charmed you would be with him; and you must allow I am a good judge of the harmony of such natures as yours and his. Keep him as long

rightly would not entail the Dukedoms on their children by other wives. The Earl of Cardigan would not accept it on that condition; the Earl of Northumberland did, and was made a Duke. Soon after Lord Cardigan got the Dukedom without that limitation, and only lost the precedence he would have had over Lord Cardigan, who was a senior Earl.

as you can, and may the pure air of Florence restore Lady Lucy's health!

I have nothing of news to add to my last. The Ministers are easy about the Spanish fleet. For France, she has business of her own. There have been great tumults even in Paris on the dearness of corn. The King is already angry with his restored Parliament, who, fancying itself restored to liberty, took upon itself to examine the rioters. The new Well-beloved posted to his *lit de justice*, but was in such a passion that, though he attempted it four times, he could not speak; others may fancy, he wanted words from more causes than one. I saw a gentleman the other day just arrived from Paris, who says the clergy are suspected of having excited the commotions. The Ministers, who fear the return of the Duc de Choiseul, choose to impute them to him.

When I came out of town Lord Temple was thought dying. The Duchess of Northumberland is still alive.

By what you say of Mr. Seymour, the Pretender and his wife should be at Paris; is that so? All the English seem to be in love with her: at least the future Lord Temple* was so.

You have not more masquerades in Carnival than we have; there is one at the Pantheon to night, another on Monday; and in June is to be a pompous one on the water, and at Ranelagh. This and the first are given by the club called the *Sçavoir Vivre*, who till now have only shone by excess of gaming. The leader is that fashionable orator Lord Lyttelton,† of whom I need not tell *you* more. I have done with these diversions, and enjoy myself here. Your old acquaintance, Lord and Lady Dacre, and your old friend Mr. Chute, dined with me to-day: poor Lord Dacre‡ is carried about, though not worse than he has been these twenty years. Strawberry was in great beauty; what joy I should have in showing it to you! Is this a wish I must never indulge? Alas!

I have had a long chain of thoughts since I wrote the last paragraph. They ended in smiling at the word *never*. How one pronounces it to the last moment! Would not one think I counted on a long series of years to come? Yet no man has the termination of all his views more before his eyes, or knows better the idleness of framing visions to one's-self. One passes away so soon, and worlds succeed to worlds, in which the occupiers build the same castles in the air. What is ours but the present moment? And how many of mine are gone! And what do I want to show to you? A plaything-vision, that has amused a poor transitory mortal for a few hours, and that will pass away like its master! Well, and yet is it not as sensible to conform to common ideas, and to live while one lives? Perhaps the wisest way is to cheat one's-self. Did one concentre all one's thoughts on the nearness and certainty of dissolution,

* Richard Grenville, who became the second Earl Temple.
† Thomas, second Lord Lyttelton; he had been at Florence.
‡ Thomas Lennard Barret; his wife was sister of Lord Camden.

all the world would lie eating and sleeping like the savage Americans. Our wishes and views were given us to gild the dream of life, and if a Strawberry Hill can soften the decays of age, it is wise to embrace it, and due gratitude to the Great Giver to be happy with it. The true pain is the reflection on the numbers that are not so blessed; yet I have no doubt but the real miseries of life,—I mean those that are unmerited and unavoidable,—will be compensated to the sufferers. Tyrants are a proof of an hereafter. Millions of men cannot be formed for the sport of a cruel child.

How happy is the Pretender in missing a Crown! When dead, he will have all the advantage that other Kings have, the being remembered; and that greater advantage, which Kings who die in their childhood have, historians will say, he would have been a great King if he had lived to reign; and that greatest advantage, which so very few of them have, his reign will be stained with no crimes and blunders. If he is at Florence, pray recommend me to him for his historian; you see I have all the qualities a Monarch demands, I am disposed to flatter him. You may tell him too what I have done for his uncle Richard III.* The deuce is in it, if I am not qualified for a royal historiographer, when I have whitewashed one of the very few whom my brethren, so contrary to their custom, have agreed to traduce. Adieu!

22d.

Our papers will tell you, or your own, that the Queen of Denmark, is dead—happily for her, I think, if she had any feeling. They say it was a rapid putrid fever. I know no more of it, for I am but this moment come to town to get my mourning.

LETTER CCXXXV.

Strawberry Hill, June 5, 1775.

I AM delighted in your satisfaction with your nephew; and now begin to fear the pain you will have in parting with him and his amiable family. The Emperor's presence will not compensate the loss, for you feel more in your private capacity than your public, though you are so excellent a *diplomatique*. You must lower your royal crest a little, for your Majesty's forces have received a check in America; but this is too sad a subject for mirth. I cannot tell you any thing very positively: the Ministers, nay the orthodox Gazette, holds its tongue. This day se'nnight it was divulged by a London Evening-Post extraordinary, that a ship on its way to Lisbon, happened to call *at* England, and left some very wonderful accounts, nay, and affidavits, saying, to wit, that General Gage had sent nine hundred men to nail up the cannon and seize a magazine at Concord;

* Alluding to his "Historic Doubts" concerning Richard III.

of which the accidental captain owns, two cannon were spiked or damaged. A hundred and fifty Americans, who swear they were fired on first, disliked the proceeding, returned blows, and drove back the party. Lord Percy was despatched to support them, but new recruits arriving, his Lordship sent for better advice, which he received, and it was to retire, which he did. The King's troops lost a hundred and fifty, the enemy not a hundred. The captain was sent for to be examined, but refused. He says, Gage sent away a sloop four days before he sailed, which sloop, I suppose, is gone to Lisbon, for in eight days we have no news of it. The public were desired by authority to suspend their belief; but their patience is out, and they persist in believing the first account, which seems the rather probable, in that, another account is come of the mob having risen at New York, between anger and triumph, and have seized, unloaded, and destroyed the cargoes of two ships that were going with supplies to Gage; and, by all accounts, that whole continent is in a flame.

So here is this fatal war commenced!

> The child that is unborn shall rue
> The hunting of that day!

We are perfectly easy about Spain's armada, and say, that too is bound for Lisbon. The Prince of Masserano is arrived, and no doubt condemns our rebellious colonists highly. Those gentlemen do not seem to be at all afraid of your question, whether they could not be sent for over, and tried. A colonel of their militia has sworn before a Justice of peace that he ordered his men to fire on the King's troops, and has sent over a copy of his affidavit—perhaps in hopes of being knighted.

Well, we don't mind all this,—we the nation. We go on diverting ourselves, and are to have a regatta on the Thames the end of this month. The French are grown philosophers, and we dance. Tell your sorrowful friend Mrs. Pitt, and the afflicted widow, that English ladies cry no longer. Low spirits are out of fashion. We have transplanted every folly under the heavens hither. We have had fandangos, and festinos, and regattas. If the Americans provoke us, we will sail forth in our Bucentaur and cuckold them with their spouse the Atlantic.

This is a gazette extraordinary, so need not be long; besides, I have been here these four days all alone, and know nothing but what the newspapers tell me. If it were not for you, I should not know there was such a person in the world as the Emperor. Our neighbour King Louis is gone to be crowned. He was besieged for three days in Versailles by twenty thousand men, and in danger of Lord Peterborough's* Sacre, who, when he was shown the Sainte Ampoulle at Rheims, and the monk asked him, "Monsieur, est-ce-que vous sacrez vos Rois?" replied, "Non, Monsieur, nous les massacrons." Insur-

* Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, celebrated by Pope.

rections in France! insurrections in Bohemia! insurrections in America! methinks the world is subject to centenary fevers! Adieu! the Horatii! I quite enjoy your mutual satisfaction in each other.

LETTER CCXXXVI.

Arlington Street, July 6, 1775.

A MONTH is elapsed since I wrote to you, I know; nor am I eager to resume the correspondence, when I have nothing pleasant to tell you. Indeed, can the events of a civil war ever be welcome news? One must be deeply embarked on one side or the other, if one ever rejoices. They who wish well to the whole, can have but one cheerful moment, which is that of peace—a moment that seems at great distance! I know no details, for I enquire not after them. The general complexion is war. All advices speak the Americans determined, and report says the Government here intends to pursue the same plan. I told you at first, I thought you and I should not see the end of this breach; and if we do not, I know what posterity will see, the ruin of both countries, at least of this. Can we support the loss of America, or a long war?

There is a black cloud nearer. The Livery of London have begun a quarrel with the King, and have actually proclaimed war on his Ministers, as you will see by the papers. I do not take panic; but, if any blow should happen from America, the mob of London is a formidable foe on a sudden: a minister may be executed before he is impeached; and considering the number of American merchants in the City, and of those who have connexions in America, riots may be raised: but I hate to prophesy. I have always augured ill of this quarrel, and washed my hands of it. It has made me resume a thought, which my age and indolence do not incline me to, another journey to Paris. You will, perhaps, hear I am setting out before my usual period of writing. There is another person* going abroad that rejoices me more, and who, I am sure, had better be out of England at this crisis. He is extremely well at present, yet certainly should not risk the winter here; he proposes to pass the next at Rome. I should like myself to spend it at Paris, but dare not hazard the gout out of my own house, unless things grow still more serious. I have long been sick of politics; when they are so very grave, they are painful; and though I have nothing to do with them, the ill-humour they occasion, and the perpetual discourse on them, are exceedingly disagreeable to one whose whole wishes are centred in repose.

I am come this morning from Lord Dacre's, where I lay last night, and return to my peaceful hill to-morrow. I will not read history there, but romances; and if the present age is determined,

* The Duke of Gloucester.

the former shall be written in bloody characters, I will read as little of it as I can. During the first part of my life, all was peace and happiness. The middle was a scene of triumph. I am sorry to think the last volume so likely to resemble a considerable part of our story. Who can wish to have lived during the wars of York and Lancaster; or from 1641 to 1660?

LETTER CCXXXVII.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 3, 1775.

In spite of all my modesty, I cannot help thinking I have a little something of the prophet about me. At least, we have not conquered America yet. I did not send you immediate word of our victory at Boston, because the success not only seemed very equivocal, but because the conquerors lost three to one more than the vanquished. The last do not pique themselves upon modern good-breeding, but level only at the officers, of whom they have slain a vast number. We are a little disappointed, indeed, at their fighting at all, which was not in our calculation. We knew we could conquer *America in Germany*, and I doubt had better have gone thither now for that purpose, as it does not appear hitherto to be quite so feasible in America itself. However, we are determined to know the worst, and are sending away all the men and ammunition we can muster. The Congress, not asleep neither, have appointed a Generalissimo, Washington, allowed a very able officer, who distinguished himself in the last war. Well! we had better have gone on robbing the Indies; it was a more lucrative trade.

We are in no pain about the Spanish fleet. Our papers say it has its hands full at Algiers, or Tunis, I forget which. There are so many people who take care of the geography of a war, that I never trouble my head about it. At present I am thinking of nothing but my journey to Paris, whither I am bound on the 15th. It is a little late, I own, for such a trip, and I did not think I should have so much resolution again; but my dear old blind woman* has begged it, and I cannot refuse, though I feel how terrible the parting will be, since I cannot expect to see her again. She is almost seventy-nine! In fact, her lamp burns as brightly as ever; but I am sure mine grows dim, and my spirits scarcely serve

> "To rock the cradle of reposing age!"

Your brother has recovered his activity, so far as to go to Linton, where he has not been these four years.

Your friend, the Duchess of Beaufort,† has already found a great and proper party for Lady Mary; Lord Granby‡ has proposed, and

* Madame la Marquise du Deffand.
† Widow of Lord Noel Somerset, Duke of Beaufort.
‡ Grandson and successor of John Manners, Duke of Rutland.

you may be sure was not rebuffed. We have no other news but the American which keeps our summer in full talk. Every day proclaims something, but so many lies, that I always wait for the echo; and advise you to do so too, or you will have many abortive beliefs.

The heroine Kingston is almost forgotten. Foote had a mind to have revived her story on the stage; but Lord Hertford would not license his piece.* It is still thought she will be tried and convicted, but her Countess-hood will save her Duchess-hood from being burnt in its hand. Adieu!

LETTER CCXXXVIII.

Paris, Sept. 7, 1775.

Your letter of Aug. 12th followed me hither from England. I can answer it from hence with less reserve than I should at home. I understand very well, my dear sir, the propriety of the style in which you write in your ministerial capacity, and never wish to have you exposé yourself to any inconvenience by unnecessary frankness. I am too much convinced of your heart and head not swerving from the glorious principles in which we were both educated, to suspect you of having adopted the principles instilled into so many Englishmen by Scotch Jacobites, the authors of the present, as they have been of every, civil war,—hence the days of Queen Elizabeth. You will on your side not be surprised that I am what I always was, a zealot for liberty in every part of the Globe, and consequently that I most heartily wish success to the Americans. They have hitherto not made *one* blunder; and the Administration have made a thousand, besides the two capital ones, of first provoking, and then of uniting the colonies. The latter seem to have as good heads as hearts, as we want both. The campaign seems languishing. The Ministers will make all their efforts against the spring. So no doubt will the Americans too. Probably the war will be long. On the side of England, it must be attended with ruin. If England prevails, English and American liberty is at an end! If the colonies prevail, our commerce is gone—and if, at last, we negotiate, they will neither forgive nor give us our former advantages.

The country, where I now am, is, luckily, neither in a condition or disposition to meddle. If it did, it would complete our destruction, even by only assisting the colonies, which I can scarce think they are blind enough not to do. They openly talk of our tyranny and folly with horror and contempt, and perhaps with amazement, and so does almost every foreign minister here, as well as every Frenchman. Instead of being mortified, as I generally am when my country is depreciated, I am comforted by finding that, though

* It was called a *Trip to Calais*, and was acted afterwards, but much altered.

one of very few in England, the sentiments of the rest of the world concur with, and confirm mine. The people with us are fascinated; and what must we be, when Frenchmen are shocked at our despotic acts! Indeed, both this nation, and their King, seem to embrace the most generous principles—the only fashion, I doubt, in which we shall not imitate them! Too late, our eyes will open!

The Duke* and Duchess are at Venice. Nothing ever exceeded the distinctions paid to them in this country. The King even invited them to Paris; but the Duke's haste to be more southerly before the bad weather begins, would not permit him to accept of that honour. They do not expect the same kindness every where—and for the English, they have even let the French see what slaves they are, by not paying their duty to the Duke and Duchess. I have written to her, without naming you, to dissuade their fixing at Rome—I fear, in vain. I proposed Sienna to them, as I flatter myself the Emperor's goodness for the Duke would dispose the Great Duke to make it agreeable to them; and their residence there would not commit you. Indeed, I do not believe you suspect me of sacrificing you to the interests of my family. On the other hand, I wish you, for your own sake, to take any opportunities of paying your court to them indirectly. They are both warm and hurt at the indignities they have received. In our present distracted situation, it is more than possible that the Duke may be a very important personage. I know well that you have had full reason to be dissatisfied with him; I remember it as much as you can: but you are too prudent as well as too good-natured, not to forgive a young prince. I own I am in pain about the Duchess. She has all the good qualities of her father,† but all his impetuosity; and is much too apt to resent affronts, though her virtue and good nature make her as easily reconciled; but her first movements are not discreet. I wish you to please her as much as possible, within your instructions. She has admirable sense, when her passions do not predominate. In one word, her marriage has given me many a pang; and though I never gave into it, I endeavour by every gentle method to prevent her making her situation still worse; and, above all things, I try never to inflame. It is all I can do where I have no ascendant, which, with a good deal of spirit of my own, I cannot expect: however, as I perfectly understand both my parties and myself, I manage pretty well. I know when to stoop, and when to stop; and when I will stoop or will not. I should not be so pliant, if they were where they ought to be.

That heroine of Doctors' Commons, about whom you inquire, the Duchess of Kingston, has at last made her folly, which I have long known, as public as her shame, by entering the lists with a merry Andrew, but who is no fool. Foote was bringing her on the stage: Lord Hertford‡ prohibited his piece. Drunk with triumph, she would give the mortal blow with her own hand—

* Of Gloucester. † Sir Edward Walpole. ‡ Lord Chamberlain.

"Pallas te hoc vulnere Pallas immolat;

but, as the instrument she chose was a *goose*-quill, the stroke recoiled on herself. She wrote a letter in the "Evening Post," which, not the lowest of her class, who tramp in pattens, would have set her mark to. Billingsgate from a ducal coronet was inviting: however, Foote, with all the delicacy she ought to have used, replied only with wit, irony, and confounded satire. The Pope will not be able to wash out the spots with all the holy water in the Tiber. I imagine she will escape a trial; but Foote has given her the *coup de grace*.

Lord Chatham, when I left England, was in a very low, languishing way: his constitution, I believe, too much exhausted to throw out the gout; and then it falls on his spirits. The last letters speak of his case as not desperate. He might, if allowed,—and it was practicable,—do much good still. Who else can, I know not. The Opposition is weak every way. They have better hearts than the Ministers, fewer good heads; not that I am in admiration of the latter. Times may produce men. We must trust to the book of events, if we will flatter ourselves. Make no answer to this; only say you received my letter from Paris, and direct to England. I may stay here a month longer; but it is uncertain.

P.S. 11th.

I had made up my letter; but those I received from England last night bring such important intelligence, I must add a paragraph. That miracle of gratitude, the Czarina, has consented to lend England twenty thousand Russians, to be transported to America. The Parliament is to meet on the 20th of next month, and vote twenty-six thousand seamen! What a paragraph of blood is there! With what torrents must liberty be preserved in America! In England what can save it? Oh! mad, mad England! What frenzy, to throw away its treasures, lay waste its empire of wealth, and sacrifice its freedom, that its prince may be the arbitrary lord of boundless deserts in America, and of an impoverished, depopulated, and thence insignificant, island in Europe! and what prospect of comfort has a true Englishman? Why, that Philip the Second miscarried against the boors of Holland, and that Louis the Fourteenth could not replace James the Second on the throne!

LETTER CCXXXIX.

Paris, Oct. 10, 1775.

I AM still here; though on the wing. Your answer to mine from hence was sent back to me from England; as I have loitered here beyond my intention: in truth, from an indisposition of mind. I am not impatient to be in a frantic country, that is stabbing itself in every

vein. The delirium still lasts; though, I believe, kept up by the quacks that caused it. Is it credible that five or six of the great *trading* towns have presented addresses against the Americans? I have no doubt but those addresses are procured by those boobies the country gentlemen, their members, and bought of the Alderman; but, is it not amazing that the merchants and manufacturers do not duck such tools in a horse-pond? When the storm will recoil I do not know, but it will be terrible in all probability, though too late. Never shall we be again what we have been! Other powers, who sit still, and wisely suffer us to plunge over head and ears, will perhaps be alarmed at what they write from England, that we are to buy twenty thousand Russian assassins, at the price of Georgia: how deep must be our game, when we pursue it at the expense of establishing a new maritime power, and aggrandize that engrossing throne, which threatens half Europe, for the satisfaction of enslaving our own brethren! Horrible policy! If the Americans, as our papers say, are on the point of seizing Canada, I should think that France would not long remain neuter, when she may regain her fur-trade with the Canadians, or obtain Canada from the Americans: but it is endless to calculate what we may lose. Our Court has staked every thing against despotism; and the nation, which must be a loser, whichever side prevails, takes part against the Americans, who fight for the nation as well as for themselves! what Egyption darkness!

This country is far more happy. It is governed by benevolent and beneficent men, under a prince who has not yet betrayed a fault, and who will be as happy as his people if he always employs such men. Messieurs de Turgot and Malesherbes are philosophers in the true sense, that is, legislators; but, as their plans tend to serve the public, you may be sure they do not please interested individuals. The French, too, are light and fickle; and designing men, who have no weapon against good men but ridicule, already employ it to make a trifling nation laugh at its benefactors: and if it is the fashion to laugh, the laws of fashion will be executed preferably to those of common sense.

There is a great place just vacant. The Maréchal de Muy, Secrétaire d'Etat pour la Guerre, died yesterday, having been cut the day before for the stone. The operation lasted thirty-five ages, that is, minutes!

Our Parliament meets on the 26th, and I suppose will act as infamously as it did last year. It cannot do worse,—scarcely so ill, for now it cannot act inconsiderately. To joke in voting a civil war is the *comble* of infamy. I hope it will present flattering addresses on our disgraces, and heap taxes on those who admire the necessity of them. If the present generation alone would be punished by inviting the yoke, it were pity but it were already on their necks! Do not wonder at my indignation, nor at my indulging it. I can write freely hence—from England, where I may find the Inquisition, it would not be so prudent; but judge of our situation, when an Eng-

lishman, to speak his mind, must come to France! and hither I will come, unless the times alter. I had rather live where a Maupeou* is banished, than where he is chief Justice.†

I know nothing of their Royal Highnesses,‡ nor have heard of them since they were at Strasburgh. I wrote twice to Venice; and if they think me in England, and have written thither, I should have received the letter, as I did yours, unless it is stopped. I can give you no advice, but to act prudently and decently, as you always do. If you receive orders, you must obey them. If you do not, you may show disposition; and yet I would not go too far. Even under orders, you may intimate concern; but I would express nothing in writing. My warmth may hurt myself but never shall make me forget the interest of my friends. Adieu!

LETTER CCXL.

Arlington Street, Oct. 23, 1775.

This will be delivered to you by Mr. Pars,§ a painter, who is going to improve himself in Italy. He has already great merit, and has done several things for me, particularly, washed drawings of Strawberry, of which he can talk to you very perfectly. This was his style originally. He executed an excellent volume full of them for Lord Palmerston,‖ one of the Lords of the Admiralty, his protector. He has since taken to oil and portraits. Pray assist him as much as you can, particularly by strong recommendations to Rome and Cardinal Albani.¶ Pray, too, make him do a view of Fiesole for me. He is very modest, sensible, and intelligent, and not mad, or I would not recommend him so strongly. I give him a letter to Sir William Hamilton.

LETTER CCXLI.

Arlington Street, Oct. 28, 1775.

As this letter will go to Paris by a private hand before it gets to the post, I shall not change the late free style of my letters, but speak my mind. Not having always the same opportunity, I shall be more circumspect both for your sake and my own.

* Chancellor of France. † Alluding to Lord Mansfield.

‡ The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.

§ Mr. Pars died at Rome in 1782.

‖ Henry Temple Viscount Palmerston. Mr. Pars had been in Switzerland with his lordship to take views.

¶ Cardinal Alexander Albani, youngest nephew of Clement XI., and a great lover of *virtù*. He was also a friend to England.

At my return I found every thing in great confusion. The Ministers had only provoked and united—not intimidated, wounded, or divided America. Errors in or neglect of execution have rendered every thing much worse; and at this instant they are not sure that the King has a foot of dominion left on that continent. Boston must be, if it is not, abandoned: Halifax, with a stand of seven thousand arms, artillery, &c., is taken,*—and well it might be! It was guarded but by fifty men! Canada is in equal danger, and the first letters are likely to say that it is gone. The Ministers say that it will take sixty thousand men to re-conquer America. They will as soon have sixty thousand armies. Whether they can get any Russians is not even yet certain; and, as it is said they must buy them by ceding some post, it is not credible that the other European powers will wink at that growing puissance becoming a maritime one. Distresses and difficulties increase every day, and genius does not increase in proportion.

Before I tell you of the opening of the Parliament, I must treat you with a farce, which is contrary to the theatric rule. Whether they were frightened themselves, or meant to frighten others, two days before the meeting, the ministers cried out, a plot! and took and committed to the Tower a Mr. Sayer, a banker of no great credit, and lately one of Wilkes's sheriffs. A young American officer of still worse character, swore Sayer had tried to bribe him to betray the Tower; and, as if that was not trusting him enough, communicated his intention of seizing the King as he should go to the House. The Ministers, as grave as they looked, could not keep any body from laughing,—no, though they trebled the Guards. In short, I have heard this morning, that they have blundered in the warrant, just as they did in Wilkes's, must release Sayer, and he will be at liberty, instead of being, as he ought to be, in Bedlam. Earl Rochford† will be prosecuted in his room, instead of being shut up for a fool, as he ought to be.

In both Houses the war was brisk and warm; the Lords sat till eleven, and the Commons till four, and the Court was galled, though it kept the field. In the former house the Lord Privy Seal, Grafton, deserted and fired on them; so did the *virtuous* Lord Lyttelton,‡ whom they have so much tried to blanch; but as they had only given him whitewash, money to buy it, he is seeking to plunder from the other camp. In the Commons, Mr. Conway,§ in a better speech than ever was made, exposed all their outrages and blunders; and Charles Fox told Lord North, that not Alexander nor Cæsar had ever conquered so much as he had lost in one campaign. Even his Lordship's friends, nay the Sctoch, taunt him in public with his laziness.

This is a sketch of the present situation: I think it will not mend abroad, and must grow more turbulent at home. France and Spain, by only feeding the war underhand, can baffle all our attempts; and without their declaring themselves, we must exhaust our men, money,

* This did not prove true.
† The Secretary of State who committed Sayer.
‡ Thomas second Lord Lyttelton.
§ General Henry Seymour Conway, only brother of Francis Earl of Hertford.

navies, and trade. These are the four trifling articles we pay for the old scheme of arbitrary power. When will the Kings of England learn how great they may be by the constitution; how sure of ruin if they try to be despotic? Cannot the fate of the Stuarts teach even the House of Hanover to have common sense? In the meantime, if France has the sense* to keep its present Ministers, it will soon be greater than ever. I could not have believed, if I had not seen with my own eyes, how very flourishing it is to what it was four years ago. It is safe, too, in that country to indulge the people in plenty, ease, liberty; for they who could admire even Louis Quatorze, adored Henri Quatre; but what signify common-place reflections? Princes do not read my letters, but always forfeit their own greatness by listening to Ministers who dip them in visions of power only to augment their own. A King might go to sleep, and be happy, and let his people be so, if he had no Ministers, who would ubuse his authority during his nap. Adieu! my dear sir; I have not time or occasion to say more. I have given you a clue to my future letters, and you will not want to have notes to them.

LETTER CCXLII.

Arlington Street, Nov. 14, 1775.

Your letter, my dear sir, of the 28th, which I received last night, is infinitely kind to me—but is that new? We had not only been alarmed to the utmost about the duke,† but remained ten days in that anxiety. Thank God! yesterday, a letter under his own hand dispelled all our fears, and he is so well as to be set out to Rome. I am very sorry you had received no orders for your behaviour, because it leaves the duke room to think you might have done more than I hope you have done; but your first duty is to the King; you were my friend long before I had the honour of knowing his royal Highness, and no attachments of mine can make me ever even wish that any friend of mine should act contrary to his duty. I am sure you have not; and if the duke should not be quite pleased with you, though I flatter myself he is too just not to weigh your situation, you must bear it with patience, and comfort yourself with having acted rightly.

Though I hear so much of it, I know not what to say of America. It is certain that the campaign has answered none of the expectations of the Administration. It seems to be the opinion now that they will think of pacific measures. They have even talked in Parliament of treating. You may be sure that system would be agreeable to my politics; but I doubt peace is not so near. The Parliament grants whatever is asked; and yet a great alteration has happened in the Administration. The Duke of Grafton has changed sides, and was turned out last Friday. Lord Rochford, too, has re-

* It had not; Turgot was removed, and Malesherbes resigned.
† The Duke of Gloucester.

tired, though not out of humour; and Lord Dartmouth has quitted the American province and taken the Privy Seal. Lord George Germaine is made Secretary of State for America, and Lord Weymouth has taken the southern province. Lord Ashburnham is to be Groom of the Stole, Lord Pelham Master of the Great Wardrobe, and Lord Lyttelton Justice in Eyre. The town is impatient to see whether this change of men implies any change of measures. I do not see why it should, for none of the new Ministers have ever inclined to the Americans; and I doubt whether the success of the latter will make them have a better disposition towards the present Administration. They have felt their strength, and experienced how much less hurt we can do them than we imagined. If they have such ideas of independence as have been imputed to them, and as probably some ambitious men among them may have, we have done nothing to convince them that their plan is impracticable; but for me, I own I know nothing, and all my conjectures may be wrong.

We have scarce any other news. Madame Kingston has petitioned the House of Lords for her trial; but they seem eager neither to acquit nor condemn her. Nobody would mind the first, and she would not mind the second, as it would go only to infamy, which she has shown she can digest.

Orloff the Great, or rather the Big,* is here; and as proud of his infamous diamonds as the Duchess of Kingston herself. He dances gigantic dances and makes gigantic love; but not conquests; yet he has quitted his post with honour, for the Empress has appointed two to supply his functions—I suppose they are Gog and Magog. Orloff talks an infinite deal of nonsense; but parts are not necessary to a royal favourite or to an assassin.

I am rejoiced you are to have so much of your nephew, and that Lady Lucy is better. I long heartily for a little *Man-n*.

You will ere long see Mr. Pars, a young painter, who is going to study at Rome. I had given him a strong letter to you. Poor man! He has lost his portmanteau between Calais and Paris, and with it every thing he had in the world; yet he persists. Pray be kind to him for my sake and for his misfortune. He is very ingenious, and has taken to oils. He was admirable in washed views, and has done several of Strawberry, of which he can talk to you by heart. Assist him too in recommendations at Rome as much as you can. He is particularly patronized by Lord Palmerston, one of the Lords of the Admiralty.

So the Pretender is in a dying way! and wants an heir!—It is not a race of phœnixes. Sir Roger Newdigate is at Rome, and formerly would have been proud to be chief mourner at his funeral.

You may imagine I shall not be quite easy till the Duchess† is delivered and well. I trembled for her when the Duke was ill, as his death might have occasioned hers too.

* The favourite lover of the Empress Catharine II.
† The Duchess of Gloucester.

LETTER CCXLIII.

Arlington Street, Dec. 8, 1775.

I HAVE received another kind letter from you, my dear sir, about the Duke and Duchess. You are very good to inform me; for though the Duchess's daughters send me general accounts, I know nothing directly, having received but a single letter from her Royal Highness since they set out. I need not say to you, that I never had such an honour from the Duke. He, I do not doubt, is recovered, and will for some time be the better, as he was before, from so wholesome an illness. I cannot be so tranquil on her situation till after her delivery. The greatness of her courage makes her support conflicts; but, perhaps, women of less resolution, who abandon themselves to fears, undergo less struggles.

Your brother, I believe, is recovered, at least Mr. Croft thinks so. He is always lame, it is true, but his face still fresh and juvenile. You and I are wrinkled parchments to our elder brothers. They are Glastonbury thorns and bloom at their Christmas. I pretend to grow a little fatter, but every other winter unravels me like Penelope's web.

There is nothing new here, at least within the sphere of my knowledge. That circle is of slender extent, and does not intersect either that of the Court or the other of the Opposition: the secrets of neither reach me, who seek not to penetrate them. We have both martial and pacific symptoms. Commissaries are going with olive branches, and acts of Parliament and regiments with daggers and swords. We seem to enrage America, as if it were a passionate man who is very sorry the moment his passion is over. The House of Commons sits eternally, though half of the usual number are gone out of town.

I saw the Duchess of Beaufort the other night, who inquired much after you. You know her daughter is to marry Lord Granby.

Tell me truly, is or has the Gabriella been a great singer? She has, at least, not honoured us but with a slender low voice. Her action is just, but colder than a vestal's. However, as you know, she carries the resemblance no farther, and, consequently, is kept by a Mr. Piers, a very rich gentleman of Yorkshire, who is so profuse to her, that I suppose she will be more capricious than ever. We import superannuated syrens, and spoil them more than the Italians can afford to do, who at least enjoy them young.

That brave statue, Sir Charles Saunders,* died yesterday. The present war has not yet furnished us with any recruit of heroes. A civil war used to be prolific—Europe is very much worn out. It is America's turn to be fruitful of genius. The last comet of this hemisphere, the King of Prussia, is on its *return*. A wit of last century,

* Admiral and Knight of the Bath. He was remarkably taciturn.

when *conceits* were in fashion, would have said, that its blazing tail turned out, as some philosophers have held, to be water, for he is dying of a dropsy. I care not of what; the World will be delivered from one of its visitations. When Voltaire follows him, their meeting would make a good "Dialogue of the Dead."

I will not lengthen my letter when I have no more to say, for though we have an empire at each end of the world, and a war in both, they do not keep us in daily news; and, what is much stranger, their metropolis, London, stagnates; but it is generally so about Christmas and autumn: in February, March, April, and May, our pulses are very feverish.

LETTER CCXLIV.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 17, 1775.

I AM afraid the Pope will be shocked: matters go very ill with his friend the Duchess of Kingston. She pretended to teaze the House of Lords for her trial though privately soliciting against it. Lord Mansfield entered the lists as her knight; and contended for a private hearing in the chamber of Parliament; and treated the affair very lightly. This revolted the Chancellor;* and he drew her failings in very ungentle colours. A committee was appointed to examine precedents. Her Grace was alarmed; went to St. James's Chapel at eight in the morning; and was delivered of a scream that roused all the Palace. The obdurate Lord's Committees proceeded. The tide was turned; and every body spoke all they knew: collusion between the Duchess and Lord Bristol, to impose on the Ecclesiastical Court; money taken by the Earl; perjury on both sides; the register of their marriage torn out, which is felony; a new certificate said to be forged; in short, nothing but a trial in Westminster Hall could satisfy justice and the public. Screams now ripened to madness; and the Duchess begged a respite for two months. That was pretty long. Her physicians were sent for. Three appeared: and, though they would not, as she desired, say that she would be mad for two months, they did allow that she is troubled with a great alienation of mind: in proof of which, she has written to the King, to remind him of his grandfather's and his own goodness to her; hoping he would not abandon her in her distress; and begging a *noli prosequi;* which his Majesty will not grant her. The Committee went on; and have decided that she shall be tried in Westminster Hall: and Lord Lyttelton, as bashful as herself, said, that, as she could not pretend to chastity or modesty, there was no room for compassion. This hopeful young man, who, on being refused a place, spoke *for* the Americans; and, in two days, on getting one, *against* them, being reproached with such precipitate

* Lord Bathurst.

changes, said, that, with his fortune, nobody could suppose he thought of the value of the salary.

What this heroic lady will attempt next is very unknown. If she decamps, outlawry and forfeitures follow. Laudanum she had recourse to formerly, on an emergency. If she adheres to frenzy, she must retire to a mad-house. If she braves her fate, I shall not wonder if she escapes. A fair one, more artful, but not of so high rank, nor patronized by a chief justice, has just foiled the law; though nobody questions her guilt. This is a Mrs. Margaret Caroline Rudd; whose history would make as large a volume as Madame de Kingston's. She sent her lawyer a brief, of which he could not make head or tail. He went to her for one more clear: "And do you imagine," said she, "that I will trust you, or any attorney in England, with the truth of my story? Take your brief; meet me in the Old Bailey, and I will ask you the necessary questions." At her trial, she did write sixty notes to him, with such artful interrogatories, that she was acquitted; and the whole court shouted with applause. I must tell you one more anecdote of Mrs. Rudd. Preparatory to her trial, she sent for some brocaded silks to a mercer; she pitched on a rich one, and ordered him to cut off the proper quantity: but the mercer, reflecting that if she were hanged, as was probable, he should never be paid, pretended he had no scissors; but would carry home the piece, cut off what she wanted, and send it to Newgate. She saw his apprehension; pulled out her pocket-book; and, giving him a bank-note of twenty pounds, said, "There is a pair of scissors." Such quickness is worth a hundred screams. We have no Joans of Arc, nor Catharines de' Medici; but this age has heroines after its own fashion: ay, and heroes, too. *Arts and Sciences have* not only *travelled west*, but north, too. Prodigious crimes can flourish in the most rigorous climates. Except poisoning the last Pope, Rome itself, the soil of Neros and Borgias, has not produced a murder worth sixpence these two hundred years. Atrocious genius is got to Berlin and Petersburgh. In two or three centuries, I suppose, there will be some horrible metropolis beyond the Atlantic, or under the South Pole; and, as the press disperses *useful* precedents, two or three kings and queens will find it suits their convenience to divide some territory, to which they have no title, near the Straits of Magellan.

LETTER CCXLV.

Arlington Street, Dec. 26, 1775.

It was very vexatious to be delivered from my own anxiety about you on Saturday last, and not to be able to remove your suspense till Tuesday. I hope, however, that the conclusion of my last week's letter diminished your apprehensions of being wronged. I now confirm

you in, and invest you with, your own estate. Linton* is yours, and you are now your own master; I say nothing of the particulars; there are few, and Mr. Croft† tells you them.

If you have been impatient for this letter, how anxious must I be too for your answer to my last! But you cannot hesitate to take possession of your estate, to see your country again after an absence of forty years, to see a sister you love, and friends I think you love too. Why do I doubt? I will not—I will flatter myself that you will fix here. Such long, faithful and laborious services as yours cannot remain unrewarded. Sir James Porter,‡ not so ancient a servant as you, has a pension of 1000*l.* a-year. Lord Sandwick and Mr. Mackenzie have always been your protectors; and if you have not made many other friends, never were amiable qualities so thrown away for forty years together—but what the duce am I doing! Why do I doubt your coming?

Since I wrote last, public affairs are grown much more serious, and unpromising of any good issue. General Carleton has been beaten by the provincials, St. John's has surrendered to them, Quebec has probably fallen into their hands, with the whole province of Canada. You may call your neighbour the Pope ungrateful, for the Canadians joined the provincials. All this is certain; the rest seems to be credited; that our ships are destroying all the towns on the coast. This is horrible! and that the King's army could not stay in Boston, but was meditating retreat to Halifax. I don't at all warrant the last article of the bill of fare; but I may well say I see no prospect of good. Seeds of the last inveteracy sown! a whole continent to be reconquered! What lives, what money to be squandered! What damages, what breaches to be repaired! And reconciliation, how to be effected? by victories on our side, or on theirs? France is straining every nerve to repair their losses; we, every one to weaken ourselves; and weak we are to such a degree, that I hope France does not know it. Come and see us before it is worse.

The King referred to the Attorney-General the Duchess of Kingston's petition for a *noli prosequi*, and it was argued at the chambers of the Attorney. How many council do you think she had retained for that single preliminary?—a mob—only fourteen. She must be in a mortal panic; and the *noli prosequi* will not be granted. She has resumed her senses. The trial is fixed for the end of February. Madam of Babylon§ and her Canadians are not in good odour; nay, I should not wonder if, like Jane Shore's friend Mrs. Blagrave, the old harlot should appropriate the entrusted jewels to her own use, when the Duchess is standing in a white sheet.

My last letter was so voluminous that it must compensate for this. How I long to have our correspondence finish! Your next, I conclude,

* The family seat in Kent, which became Sir Horace Mann's by the will of his elder brother, Edward Louisa Mann.—Ed.

† The Solicitor employed.

‡ Who had been Minister at Constantinople.

§ The Pope, in whose custody the Duchess of Kingston was said to have left her valuable effects at Rome.

will mention the passage of the Duke and Duchess* through Florence. Adieu!

LETTER CCXLVI.

Jan. 28, 1776.

I AM in so much haste now to have our correspondence end, that I no longer love even to write you a letter. My impatience to hear that you think of coming over, is extreme—think of it!—I mean, to hear that you have fixed the time. Surely you can think of nothing else. Old Knight, the cashier,† used to come once a-year to Calais to look at the cliffs of England. You are not banished, as he was, but have been much longer absent. I will forgive any imprudence of impetuosity to come; take care I hear of no coldness. I am almost afraid to frighten you with an account of our winter; but then it is such a winter as I never saw. I was with you at Florence in 1741, and those ever since have been springs, and sometimes summers. This was made for the North Pole, has lasted three weeks, and grows every day worse and worse. It caught me at Lord Ossory's‡ in Bedfordshire, and locked me up there above a fortnight. At last it gave me the gout in both hands, on which I set out directly for London through mountains of snow and quarries of ice. I am still confined, though I have had very little pain; yet I write with difficulty, and ill-humour too, for I expected no gout this year.

By your silence, though you mention them at Rome, I find their Royal Highnesses my nephew and niece did not pass through Florence, for which I am not sorry. I have had a letter from the Duchess, who tells me the Pope has been a perfect knight-errant in courtesy and gallantry, and enjoined all manner of attentions to them from his college and nobility. It is not he that sent it to me, but I have had a red hat given to me to day—it was Cardinal Wolsey's. I am impatient to hear the result of Lady Orford's audience. I did not imagine she would ask it, as she was not content with the Duke§ when he was last at Florence: I suppose she is proud of her *nepotism*.

The trial of the late Pope's friend, the Duchess of Kingston, is put off till April.

The Government is straining every nerve to muster a great army in America, though it must combat for its very landing. Fifteen thousand Hessians and Brunswickers are retained. This force, if half of it can get thither and land, must be maintained from hence. We are not apt to be frugal about our armies abroad. Guess at the

* Of Gloucester.

† Robert Knight, Cashier of the South-Sea Company in the memorable year 1720. His son created Lord Luxborough, and afterwards Earl of Catherlogh, and had an only son, who died before him, without issue.

‡ Ampthill. § The Duke of Gloucester.

millions this will cost—and come and see your country before all its splendour is at an end! Boston is famishing—what is the fate of Quebec, we do not yet know. The Parliament is met, but two-thirds of the members are frozen in the country. Omiah, the native of Otaheite, breakfasted with Mr. Conway to-day, and learns to skate. He had no notion of ice, and calls it *stone-water*; a very good expression. If he were in Ireland they would advise him to carry over some in spirits.

Shall you bring over a great many fine things for Linton? Shall you not regret all you have given to me? I would give them up to have you here. Don't you invite me to Linton? How long your letter is coming! Take care to know me when you see me. Expect me as wrinkled as Methuselah. Pray don't impute the change to thirty-five years and a tolerable quantity of gout, but to this hard winter—I assure you I looked charmingly a month ago. I have some spirits left still, and I wish I don't behave like a boy when we meet.

LETTER CCXLVII.

Arlington Street, Feb. 15, 1776.

You have chilled me so thoroughly by the coldness of your answer, and by the dislike you express to England, that I shall certainly press you no more to come. I thought at least it would have cost you a struggle.

I have kept my bed for a fortnight with the gout in my limbs, and yesterday was the first of my rising—but it was after a sleep of eleven hours, which shows how excellent my constitution would be, if not harassed by the gout. I bear that affliction with patience—with patience, which my reflection has taught me is *the desperate substitute to Hope*, and which does not delude one with charming visions!

The Duke of Gloucester did me the honour of notifying to me the birth of his son. It was most welcome intelligence, and saved me a month's anxiety for the Duchess, who I thought was likely to go a fortnight longer.

We have no news but those of preparations against America. I can add nothing to what you know I think on that subject.

Monsieur de Guisnes has been suddenly recalled—it is said on a successful cabal of his enemies; which, if so, bodes his total ruin. As his successor is not appointed, and there is a great armament at Toulon (though said to assist the Spaniards against Algiers) the Stocks took fright, and expressed it: I don't know whether with reason—but can their panic be extremely premature? There is talk of Lord Stormont leaving his embassy for a post in Scotland, and of Sir Joseph Yorke replacing him at Paris.

Lady Mary Coke has returned some services at Paris, and many years of great attentions, with singular rudeness to me, since my return—but she is mad; and I suppose the birth of the Prince at Rome will send her to Bedlam. Adieu! The accounts from Rome continue good.

LETTER CCXLVIII.

March 22, 1776.

I have been so long confined, as I am still, that with a dearth of public events, I have been little disposed to write. My gouts, as they never attack my head or stomach, are not alarming. One believes they protract one's life, but they certainly undermine its vigour and its comforts. They reckon this winter unfavourable to that disorder, and I certainly have seen several co-patients who complain of the slowness of their recovery. My common sense tells me, that repeated attacks and increasing years must diminish the powers of recovery. If my companions are more sanguine, they flatter themselves, or say they do.

We know nothing new from America, since the general belief that the attempt on Quebec has failed by the death of Montgomery, who was not so fortunate as Wolfe, to die a conqueror, though very near being so. No authentic accounts are come from thence. In truth, the want of communication, but to the Government, bolstered up by an infinitude of lies, renders every thing one hears problematic. However, had the Ministers any good news, they would be eager enough to divulge it. The season is far advanced, yet their expeditions are much behindhand, and the troops that do go, will arrive during the dangerous heats. Indeed, I do not think the general language is so prophetic of certain success as it was three months ago, and people seem to grow much more clear of the unpromising aspect of affairs than they were.

What else can I tell you? That dissipation and gaming continue to stride before the war. Yes, verily. A new club is opened in St. James's-street, that piques itself on surpassing all its predecessors. But this is almost common-place. The Duke of Wirtemberg, who has wasted revenues enough to be worthy to be of it, is here, but *here* is no phenomnon.

"A senator of Rome, while Rome survives,"

can continue to waste as much in one evening as a German prince in an opera for a season. But it is the nation that is really gaming deep—we have set twelve provinces on the cast of a die. The Duke of Chartres,* they say, is coming to the University of Newmarket.

* Afterwards the notorious Duke of Orleans.

Different philosophers, in different ages, visit different nations for different kinds of lore. Our crocodiles are not the same with those of Egypt.

The Duke and Duchess seem much pleased with Rome. I hope their villa is not within the precincts of the malaria.

I did hear the report of the separation of the Cowpers, but not knowing them, never thought about them. To tell you the truth, the Earl,* I conclude is a madman; therefore, I wonder he does *not* come home. Our Countess,† I am told, has bought an estate; is it in Tuscany or Naples?

Every body is on the quest for tickets for the Duchess of Kingston's trial. I am persuaded her impudence will operate in some singular manner. Probably she will appear in weeds with a train to reach across Westminster Hall, with mourning Maids of Honour to support her when she swoons at her dear Duke's name, and in a black veil to conceal her not blushing. To this farce, novel and curious as it will be, I shall not go. I think cripples have no business in crowds, but at the Pool of Bethesda; and to be sure, this is no angel that troubles the waters.

I have nothing to add but an excellent *bon mot* of Wilkes's yesterday, on Lord George Germaine. The former had moved for a more equal representation, from the natural objection to the small boroughs. Two of them, indeed, he owned, had the merit of sending two great Ministers; Banbury, which chooses Lord North; and East Grinstead, that furnishes an heroic Secretary of State, who might conquer America, though he believed it would not be in *Germany*.‡ Adieu!

LETTER CCXLIX.

Arlington Street, April 17, 1776.

I OPENED your letter of the 2nd with trembling, for the Duchess of Gloucester had told me, with great concern, the danger of Lady Lucy.§ As she was still alive, and your nephew thought her in less danger, I will venture to hope she is safe, because I wish it so much for all your sakes; but I shall be very impatient for another letter, and to hear you yourself are better.

You may think of America, if you please; but we think and talk but of one subject, the solemn comedy that is acting in Westminster Hall. Deep wagers had been laid that the Duchess-Countess‖ would decamp before her trial. This, with a million of other stories, have

* Earl Cowper. † The Countess of Orford,

‡ Alluding to the battle of Minden, where Lord George Germaine was disgraced for not leading up the Blues. Lord Chatham boasted of having conquered America in Germany.

§ Lady Lucy Noel, wife of Sir Horace Mann, the younger.

‖ Elizabeth Chudleigh, Countess of Bristol, married, during the Earls life, to the last Duke of Kingston.

been so spread, that I am determined to believe no one fact but what I shall read in the printed trial; for at it I have not been, though curious enough about so august a mummery, and so original a culprit; but I am too little recovered to encounter crowds.

The scene opened on Wednesday with all its pomp, and had drawn hither even a Countess Castiglione, from Milan. The doubly noble prisoner went through her part with universal admiration. Instead of her usual ostentatious folly, and clumsy pretensions to cunning, all her conduct was decent, and even seemed natural. Her dress was entirely black and plain; her attendants not too numerous, her dismay at first perfectly unaffected. A few tears balanced cheerfulness enough; and her presence of mind and attention never deserted her. This rational behaviour, and the pleadings of her four counsel, who contended for the finality of the Ecclesiastical Court's sentence against a second trial, carried her triumphantly through the first day, and turned the stream much in her favour.

Yesterday was less propitious. The Attorney and Solicitor-Generals, and Dunning, refuted the Duchess's council, made a very contrary impression, and seem to have unhinged some of her firmness. She was blooded as soon as she retired, fell into a great passion of tears, and is, or affects to be, very ill. However, the Lords have given her and themselves a respite of two days. On Friday the opinion of the Judges is to be asked on her plea against a second trial, which, it is not doubted, will be overruled. All the future is uncertainty; whether she will be sent back to the Ecclesiastical Court, or whether the Lords will proceed to trial—either of which would produce deep probing into her history; or whether, to avoid either, she will not plead guilty, as soon as the Ecclesiastical Court's decisive jurisdiction is set aside. In fact, this is as much the trial of the Ecclesiastical Court as of the prisoner; and may, at least ought to, produce a reform of that Popish-tribunal. The Earl of Bristol* does not stand in a fairer predicament; and is not the whole burlesque, when, except the foreigners, there could not be one person in the Hall who was not as much convinced of the bigamy as of their own existence? But the world can make *laws* against crimes, till nobody knows whether there is any crime which may not be committed *legally*.

I now submit to recall my thoughts to America, for the sake of you Italians and little States, who do not know how superior fashion is in a great nation to national interests. You need not be too impatient for events. The army, that was to overrun the Atlantic continent, is not half set out yet; but it will be time enough to go into winter quarters. What we have heard lately thence is not very promising. The Congress, that was said to be squabbling, seems to act with harmony and spirit; and Quebec is not thought to be so safe

* Augustus John Hervey, Earl of Bristol. He had never avowed his marriage with Miss Chudleigh, and was supposed to have connived for a sum of money at her marrying the Duke.

as it was a month ago. However, that is the business of the Ministers; no body else troubles his head about the matter. Few people knew much of America before; and now that all communication is cut off, and the Administration does not think itself bound to chant its own disappointments, or the praises of the enemy, we forget it as much as if Columbus had not routed it out of the ocean.

Who thought of Mrs. Pitt* rising again at Pisa? I was told she was in Provence, and imagined her on her return. But who can calculate the motions of such eccentric heads as the English? My dear countrymen and women are—very sensible.

I return to poor Lady Lucy and you and your nephew. How I wish you all at ease about her! Pray, too, be assured, I acquiesce in all you say on your own return, though grieved at your resolution, and more so at the necessity you find in adhering to it. It is not my disposition to prefer my own pleasures to the welfare of my friends. Your return might have opened a warm channel of affection, which above thirty years could not freeze: but I am sure you know my steadiness too well to suspect me of cooling to you, because we are both grown too old to meet again. I wished that meeting, as a luxury beyond what old age often tastes; but I am too well prepared for parting with every thing, to be ill-humouredly chagrined because one vision fails. Visions are the consolation of life; it is wise to indulge them, unless one builds on them as realities. Our dreams are almost at an end! Mine are mixed with pain; yet I think it does not make me peevish. I accept with thankfulness every hour in which I do not suffer. I am not at all impatient for the moment that will terminate both anguish and cheerfulness, and I endeavour to form my mind to resigning the first with gratitude, and the latter with easy submission. Adieu!

LETTER CCL.

Arlington Street, April 24, 1776.

I WRITE again so soon, because I owe you the sequel of the trial. If the Pope expects his Duchess back, he must create her one, for her peers have reduced her to a countess. Her folly and obstinacy now appear in their full vigour—at least her faith in the Ecclesiastical Court, trusting to the infallibility of which, she provoked this trial, in the face of every sort of detection. A living witness of the first marriage, a register of it fabricated long afterwards by herself, the widow of the clergyman who married her, many confidants to whom she had trusted the secret, and even Hawkins the surgeon, privy to the birth of her child, appeared against her. The Lords were tender, and would not probe the earl's collusion; but the Ec-

* Mrs. Anne Pitt, sister of William Earl of Chatham.

clesiastical Court, who so readily accepted their juggle, and sanctified the second match, were brought to shame—they care not if no reformation follows. The Duchess, who could produce nothing else of consequence in her favour, tried the powers of oratory, and made a long oration, in which she cited the protection of her late mistress.* Her council would have curtailed this harangue, but she told them they might be good lawyers, but did not understand speaking to the passions. She concluded her rhetoric with a fit, and the trial with rage, when convicted of the bigamy. The Attorney-General laboured to have her burnt in the hand, but the Judges were hustled into an opinion against it, and it was waved. So all this complication of knavery receives no punishment, but the loss of the Duchy; unless the civil courts below are more severe than the supreme tribunal; and thither her antagonists intend to resort. The earl's family have talked loudly of a divorce; but if it is true that he has given her a bond of thirty thousand pounds not to molest her, and that this bond is in Lord Barrington's hands, either she will recriminate, and collusion proved prevents a divorce; or his silence will speak the collusion. I am heartily tired of this farce, having heard of nothing else this fortnight. Happily, in this giant town one is not long troubled with stale events. As I have heard no more from you of Lady Lucy, I flatter myself that all danger is over. I shall like to have it confirmed.

There is a report to-day that Spain has made free with Jamaica, and taken it. I do not believe it; but it is certain America furnishes Administration with no good news. Fifteen thousand of the destined troops are not yet sailed thither.

I have just met with your name in a printed book, in which your politeness is celebrated. It is called "Letters from Italy by an Englishwoman." This is a Mrs. Miller, whom perhaps you recollect. Ten years ago I knew her and her husband, the faithful companion of her travels, at Bath, near which they have a small house and garden in a beautiful spot called Bath-Easton. They were mighty civil simple people, living with her mother, Mrs. Riggs, a rough kind of English humourist. They ran out their fortune, and all went to France to repair it. In France the mother was left with the grandchildren, while the fond pair resorted to Italy. Thence they returned, *her* head turned with France and *bouts-rimés; his* with *virtù*. They have instituted a poetic academy at Bath-Easton, give out subjects, and distribute prizes; publish the prize verses, and make themselves completely ridiculous; which is a pity, as they are good-natured well-meaning people. The poor Arcadian patroness does not spell one word of French or Italian right through her three volumes of Travels. I wonder we have never had our friend Lady Pom-

* Miss Chudleigh had been Maid of Honour to the Princess Dowager of Wales, and remained so long after she was married to Mr. Hervey, but the marriage was not owned. As she married the Duke of Kingston, without being a widow, the enigmatic epitaph of *Elia Lælia Crispus, nec Virgo, nec Mulier, nec Vidua, sed Omnia*, was applied to her by the author of these letters.

fret's, as she had something now and then like sense, they would have been still more absurd. Adieu!

P.S. I must add an anecdote of the Duchess-countess that I heard last night. On some altercation between her and Sir Francis Molyneux, Black Rod, under whose custody she was in her own house, she carried him into another room, and showed him a hole in the ceiling or wainscot made by a pistol-ball. I have heard formerly that she used to terrify the Duke of Kingston in that manner, with threatening to murder him or herself. I think they favoured her age as much as her person on her trial, for they have made her but fifty. She must be fifty-five or six. She and her brother were my play-fellows, when we lived at Chelsea, and her father was Deputy-Governor of the College. I am fifty-nine almost, and boys and girls do not play together, unless near of an age, much less before one of them is born. I believe you remember them at Chelsea as well as I; and what a heroine her mother was—at least I have not forgotten this story of the latter. She was coming home late at night, with two of the old pensioners as patrol, walking behind the coach. She was asleep, and was awakened by three foot-pads, one of whom held a pistol at her breast. She coolly put her head out of the other window, and said, fire! The patrol fired, and shot the robber. The daughter does not degenerate.

Second P.S. There is not a word of truth in the report about Jamaica; such endless lies are coined every day, that one is afraid of writing a word of news before it is musty with age.

LETTER CCLI.

Strawberry Hill, May 17, 1776.

As I knew no more than the newspapers would tell you, I did not announce to you the retreat of the King's army from Boston. Great pains were taken, and no wonder, to soften this disgrace. Such arts may serve a moment, but the truth emerges, unless some advantage compensates—and as yet, that is neither the case, nor seems likely to be. What is or will be the fate of General Howe or his army cannot be known for some time—I doubt his prospect is not fair. Many think Quebec itself is gone, and that the Ministry knew it. The American war begins to lose its popularity.

I saw in the papers to-day that your younger* sister is dead. I tell it you without ceremony: I believe you never was acquainted with her; nor was I. By the long interval, I trust Lady Lucy is quite out of danger, and your nephew at ease about her.

We swarm with new Peers and Peeresses, English, Scotch, and Irish; you will see the two former in the gazette, the last are known,

* The two younger sisters of Sir Horace Mann were married to two gentlemen of the name of Foote, in Kent.

but not yet declared. We have coveys of foreigners too, particularly French: I have given two dinners here lately to the latter.

Is it not shameful to send such a note as this so far? If I would have recourse to little arts, I might have transcribed the list of peerages, which would have reached to the bottom of the page—but a bede-roll of unknown names would only tire you. It has long been a settled point that we cannot correspond about obscure persons, as many of these are. You are a stranger to common actors: like heroic tragedies we can deal only in very great personages. Even newspapers have the advantage of me, for they may detail births, deaths, and marriages. The summer will probably not be so barren as that season generally is, though the great campaign will scarcely begin before August; yet Quebec and Halifax must be fruitful of something, and perhaps Virginia and New York—but you are no vulture, and do not desire to banquet on battles. In one word, my letters written for your information, must depend on events; and when they are short, or none, you will excuse it; and now that half my letter has been an apology, it is best to put an end to it.

May 18th.

Your letter of the 4th is this moment arrived, with others from France, and would enable me to cancel my last paragraphs. I am heartily sorry for your accounts of Lady Lucy, but cannot believe in the contagion of consumptions, especially in a better climate. Were it catching, it would be still more common here than it is. The child may indeed be affected, as partaking of the mother's constitution; but I who have little faith in physicians, have none at all in those of Italy, where physic is as much an old woman as religion.

As soon as I go to town, I will enquire into the etiquette of your proxyhood.* The King gives plate to his god-children; you, I dare to say, are to give nothing, and indubitably have no particular dress. Here I think the lord or lady who represents, rides backwards and alone in a royal coach; as your own is a representative of the King's no doubt it will do—but you shall know in time.

A great revolution has happened in France. Monsieur de Maurepas and Vergennes, either not to burn their own fingers, or to involve Turgot (of whom the former was grown jealous) and Malesherbes in a scrape, set the latter on representing to the Queen that she ought to abandon M. de Guisnes. Her Majesty, and consequently the public, laughed at him. He, who hated his place, asked to resign, and it was at last granted. But to-day's letters add, that Turgot is also dismissed, and the King has thanked M. de Guisnes for his services and made him a *Duc à brevet*. This implies what I have said these six months, that a woman who is always in the society of a man, however unmanly and unwomanly, would prevail at last, if he passed no moments in the society of any other woman. Malesherbes is the best of men, but void of all ambition. Turgot has the

* Sir Horace was to stand godfather for the King to a child of Earl Cowper.

ambition of reforming the nation, and blessing the people; is intrepid, indifferent to fortune, and determined to carry his points, or fall. Such men, friends of human kind, could not think of war, however fair the opportunity we offered to them. Poor France, and poor England! Choiseul, if not Choiseul, some Louvois or other, will rise out of this fall of patriot philosophers; and then we shall be forced to see the wisdom of the stamp-act, and of persisting in taxing America! Somebody rings at the gate, but I have said enough to furnish you with reflections. Monsieur de Noailles is named ambassador hither, but that does not comfort me.

May 20.

I saw Lady Holderness* to-night and consulted her, and found that I had been right in all my directions. *You* can give nothing unless you are ordered: and as you cannot possibly go in one of the King's coaches, need not ride backwards in your own. I have neither room, nor more to say if I had.

LETTER CCLII.

Strawberry Hill, May 27, 1776.

This fatal year puts to the proof the nerves of my friendship! I was disappointed of seeing you when I had set my heart on it,—and now I have lost Mr Chute!† It is a heavy blow; but such strokes reconcile one's-self to parting with this pretty vision, life! What is it, when one has no longer those to whom one speaks as confidentially as to one's own soul? Old friends are the great blessing of one's latter years—half a word conveys one's meaning. They have memory of the same events, and have the same mode of thinking. Mr. Chute and I agreed invariably in our principles; he was my counsel in my affairs, was my oracle in taste, the standard to whom I submitted my trifles, and the genius that presided over poor Strawberry! His sense decided me in every thing; his wit and quickness illuminated every thing. I saw him oftener than any man; to him in every difficulty I had recourse, and him I loved to have here, as our friendship was so entire, and we knew one another so entirely, that he alone never was the least constraint to me. We passed many hours together without saying a syllable to each other—for we were both above ceremony. I left him without excusing myself, read or wrote before him, as if he were not present. Alas! alas! and how *self* presides even in our grief! I am lamenting myself, not him!—no, I am lamenting my other self. Half is gone; the other remains solitary. Age and sense will make me bear my affliction with submission and composure—but for ever—that little *for*

* One of the Ladies of the Bed-chamber to Queen Charlotte.
† John Chute, Esq., of the Vine in Hampshire; the last of the male line.

ever that remains, I shall miss him. My first thought will always be, *I will go talk to Mr. Chute on this*,—the second, *alas! I cannot*;—and therefore judge how my life is poisoned! I shall only seem to be staying behind one who is set out a little before me.

Mr. Chute for these last two or three years was much broken by his long and repeated shocks of gout, yet was amazingly well, considering that he had suffered by it from twenty to seventy-three! Still as he never had had it in his head or stomach, I never was alarmed till last summer, when he had a low lingering fever, and sickness and pain in his breast, with returns of an excessive palpitation at his heart, which formerly much alarmed me, but of which he had been free for some years. He got better and went to the Bath, which gave him the gout, and here turned quite well; so well, that, alarmed at our situation, he thought of drawing some money out of the Stocks and buying an annuity, saying, that he thought his life as good as any man's for five years. I am sure I thought so too. On Thursday last, being surprised at his not calling on me for three days, which was unusual, I went to him and was told that he was very ill. I found him in bed; he had so violent a pain in his breast that two days before he had sent for Dr. Thomas, whom he had consulted in the summer, though of all men the most averse to physicians. Thomas had given him a hundred drops of laudanum and asafœtida. Mr. Chute said, *it is not the gout; I have had my palpitation, and fear it is something of a polypus*. Thus, perfectly reasonable, though with much more indifference than he who was all spirit and eagerness used to have, I attributed it to the laudanum, and indeed he desired me to leave him, as he was heavy, and wanted to sleep. He dozed all that evening, and had no return of pain. On Friday morning still without pain. I saw him again. He had taken more asafœtida, but no more laudanum; yet, when I said, I trusted the pain was gone, he said, *I do not know; the effects of the laudanum are not yet gone*. I said, I thought that impossible; that the pain would have surmounted the laudanum by that time, if the pain were not removed. I was coming hither on business, and charged his valet to send for me if the pain returned. On Saturday morning I rejoiced at not receiving even a letter by the post, and concluded all was well. This dream of satisfaction lasted all that day and Saturday night. I knew he would take no more laudanum, unless the pain returned, and that then I should be advertised. But, oh, unhappy! Yesterday, just as I had breakfasted, and was in the garden, I heard the bell at the gate ring, and wondered, as it was but ten o'clock, who could come to me so early. I went to see, and met my valet-de-chambre, with a letter in his hand, who said, *Oh, sir, Mr. Chute is dead!* In a word, he had continued quite easy till three that morning, when he said, *Who is in the room?* His own valet replied, *I, sir!* and, going to the bed, found him very ill, ran to call help, and, returning as quickly as possible, saw him dead! It was certainly a polypus; his side immediately grew black as ink. A charming death for him, dearest friend! And why should I lament? His eyes, always short-sighted, were grown dimmer, his

hearing was grown imperfect, his hands were all chalk-stones and of little use, his feet very lame—yet how not lament? The vigour of his mind was strong as ever; his power of reasoning clear as demonstration; his rapid wit astonishing as at forty, about which time you and I knew him first. Even the impetuosity of his temper was not abated, and all his humane virtues had but increased with his age. He was grown sick of the world; saw very, very few persons; submitted with unparallelled patience to all his suffering; and, in five-and-thirty years, I never once saw or heard him complain of them, nor, passionate as he was, knew him fretful. His impatience seemed to proceed from his vast sense, not from his temper; he saw every thing so clearly and immediately, that he could not bear a momentary contradiction from folly or defective reasoning. Sudden contempt broke out, particularly on politics, which, having been fixed in him by a most sensible father, and matured by deep reflection, were rooted in his inmost soul. His truth, integrity, honour, spirit, and abhorrence of all dirt, confirmed his contempt; and even I, who am pretty warm and steady, was often forced to break off politics with him, so impossible was it to be zealous enough to content him when I most agreed with him. Nay, if I disputed with him, I learnt something from him, and always saw truth in a stronger and more summary light.

His possession of the quintessence of argument reduced it at once into axioms, and the clearness of his ideas struck out flashes of the brightest wit. He saw so suddenly and so far, that, as Mr. Bentley said of him long ago, *his wit strikes the more you analyze it, and more than at first hearing; he jumps over two or three intermediate ideas, and couples the first with the third or fourth.* Don't wonder I pour out my heart to you; you knew him, and know how faithfully true all I say of him. My loss is most irreparable. To me he was the most faithful and secure of friends, and a delightful companion. I shall not seek to replace him. Can I love any that are old, more than I have had reason for loving them? and is it possible to love younger, as one loved an habitual old friend of thirty-five years standing? I have young relations that may grow upon me, for my nature is affectionate, but can they grow *old* friends? My age forbids that. Still less can they grow companions. Is it friendship to explain half one says? One must relate the history of one's memory and ideas; and what is that to the young, but old stories? No, my dear sir, *you* could be that resource, but I must not think of it—I must not be selfish. I must do what I ought to do, while I remain here; pass my time as amusingly as I can; enjoy the friends I have left; drink my grief in silence—it is too sincere for parade; and what cares the world about my private sensations? Or what has an old man to do but to be forgotten; and to remember how soon he will be so? Forgive this expansion of my heart; it was necessary to me. I will not often mention poor Mr. Chute even to you. His loss is engraven on my soul, and real grief does not seek for applause. Could the world's plaudit comfort me, sit with me, hear me, advise

me? Did it know Mr. Chute's worth as well as I did? Does it love me as well? When it does, I will beg its compassion. I have done, and will now show you that I am master of myself, and remember *you*, and consider that at this distance of time you cannot feel what I do, and must be anxious about public affairs. If I indulged my own feelings, I should foreswear thinking of the public. *He* is gone to whom I ran with every scrap of news I heard; but I promised to forget myself: I will go take a walk, shed a tear, and return to you more composed.

I take up my pen again, and fear my last sentences have made you expect some news. I know none; except that I think the intoxication of this country begins to wear off. The stocks have taken the alarm, and the Ministers have felt it some time. The change in the French councils has changed the spirits of ours. I believe almost any peace would be welcome to them. I doubt the Americans have experienced too much of our inability to hurt them; and as I have no great faith in virtue tempted by power, I expect that the American leaders having too fair a field before them, will not easily part with dictatorships and counselships to retire to their private ploughs. Oh! Madness, to have squandered away such an empire! Now we tremble at France, which America enabled us to resist. How naturally our ideas hang on our country, even when all future ages are the same to one who is going to leave it! What will it be to me a few years hence, whether England shrinks back to its little insular insignificance under George the Third or George the Tenth? Yet, as our minds seldom roam into the future affairs of the world, we rejoice or grieve over the state of our country according to the condition in which we leave it at our departure. Else why do people nurse visions of pride about their own descendants? How long do the greatest and most ancient families last? What a speck in rolling ages does the longest genealogy occupy!—but I will moralize no more. To-day's misfortune has given a wise cast to my mind. Spirits and folly will have their turn again, and perhaps are as wise. To act with common sense according to the moment, is the best wisdom I know; and the best philosophy, to do one's duties, take the world as it comes, submit respectfully to one's lot, bless the Goodness that has given so much happiness with it, whatever it is, and despise affectation, which only makes our weakness more contemptible, by showing that we are not what we wish to appear. Adieu!

LETTER CCLIII.

Strawberry Hill, June 5, 1776.

My letters grow scarce or multiply according as the season is fruitful of events or not. These last days have been very prolific.

The freshest incidents, and those that will interest you the most, are from America, and have raised the hopes that a fortnight ago were exceedingly desponding. The provincials have again attempted to storm Quebec, and been repulsed with great loss by the conduct and bravery of Carleton,* who, Mr. Conway has all along said, would prove himself a very able general. Succours have since arrived in the town. The remarkable General Lee,† is taken prisoner by General Clinton, in Carolina; as the Americans say, by his own treachery: however, though the fact is not doubted, as it comes from themselves, the story is very dark. General Howe is arrived safely at Halifax, some say, having been repulsed at New York. The American Admiral Hopkins, with three or four ships has been worsted and disgraced by a single frigate. Your Bible, the Gazette, will tell you more particulars, I suppose, for I have not yet seen it; and the Alamains of the Court have given Howe a victory, and Hopkins chains, which I do not believe will appear in that Chronicle; however, you may certainly sing some Te Deums in your own chapel.

These triumphs have come on the back of a very singular revolution which has happened in the Penetralia, and made very great noise. Yesterday se'nnight it was declared that the Bishop of Chester‡ and Mr. Jackson, preceptor and sub-preceptor to the Prince of Wales, were dismissed, and that Lord Holderness§ and Mr. Smelt,‖ governor and sub-governor, had resigned their posts; Lord Bruce¶ and Dr. Hurd**, Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry, being named their successors, and the former declared Earl of Ailesbury. No reason, whatever was assigned for so total a change, which did not allay the astonishment. It is now known that on Lord Holderness's return from the south of France, he found a great alienation from him in the minds of his royal pupils,†† which he attributed to Jackson. This grew so bad, that after vainly complaining of Jackson, and as vainly having obtained reproof, the Bishop, who seemed to be the instigator of the manœuvre and subsequent *disobedience*, was turned out with his instrument, and the Earl saw it hopeless to try to recover his authority. Mr. Smelt, promoted by him, would not survive him. I make no comments—your own mind will suggest alarming reflections on the prospect of a scene that has twice happened since the family came over.

What will you say, if out of this change of decoration, another has happened already: yes, already! Lord Bruce, who had taken seisin, retired abruptly into the country, without asking or taking leave. On inquiry where he was and when he would return, his colleague

* Afterwards Sir Guy Carleton, Knight of the Bath, and Commander at New York till the peace.

† This did not prove true at that time, though it did happen afterwards.

‡ Dr. Markham, afterwards Archbishop of York.

§ Robert Darcy, last Earl of Holderness. ‖ Leonard Smelt, Esq.

¶ Bruce Brudenel Bruce, youngest brother of the Earl of Cardigan.

** Dr. Hurd was afterwards Bishop of Worcester.

†† The Prince of Wales, and Prince Frederick, Bishop of Osnaburgh, afterwards Duke of York.

said he had no thoughts of returning. It is said that his mad wife, Mr. Hoare's daughter, had written a piteous letter, promising she should die if deprived of her dear Lord; but must not her dear lord be as frantic, to quit in so indecent a manner? Have not I told you long, that we are all mad? Whence do you think the successor is chosen? From the self-same family. It is the Duke of Montagu*.

Here is a short letter, which with any address I might have made a folio; but I content myself with giving you the quintessence of events. My own mind loses every year the roots that hold it to the world. There is little pleasure in thinking, when one has no longer those to whom and with whom one loved to communicate reflections. One's own country becomes another country when the *dramatis personæ* are totally changed. Young princes and their favourites only give one a peep into the history of the future world, as if a printer brought one of the wet sheets of a book that is to be published after one's death. If one outlives one's friends, it is being but a Strulbrug. Adieu!

LETTER CCLIV.

Strawberry Hill, July 16, 1776.

Every day may produce news from America, but nothing has come since my last. I wish the probability of news may not be opened at a new war-office. The vast preparations in France, exacted as they pretend by Spain, and not much more comfortable for that, either announce war, may beget it, or at least can easily be blown into a flame. Why we should tempt it, and yet not expect it, is a problem not soluble by my old-fashioned head.

The Duchess of Bristol† is returned—to avoid outlawry. The Earl, whom she has made a dowager, talks, and seems to act resolution of being divorced; and the Ecclesiastical Court, affects to be ashamed, and thunders against the Duchess. In the mean time, the Meadowses‡ prosecute the Earl for the whole receipt of the Kingston estate, as her Grace is his Countess. People cry out, that the House of Lords cannot grant a divorce after such symptoms of collusion. I beg their pardons; I do not know what the House of Lords cannot do.

Will you take this for a letter? It will, at least, do to keep a place for its predecessor, which was more portly, if not more substantial. If I would stoop to artifice, I could insert a list of so many new Irish Lords, that there would be no room to sign my name. But what would you care for a bede-roll of mushrooms, half of whom, like your

* George Brudenel, Earl of Cardigan and Duke of Montagu.

† The Duchess of Kingston.

‡ Nephews of the Duke of Kingston by his only sister, Lady Frances Pierpoint, wife of Mr. Meadows, second son of Sir Philip.

procession-nobility at Florence,* will not be gentlemen under a generation or two? They are like the Lord Bateman, whom George I. made an Irish peer, to avoid making him a Knight of the Bath; for, said he, "I can make him a lord, but I cannot make him a gentleman." Nay, all these earls and barons may be well born for aught I know, but their very number makes them a mob—they are thirty.

What is become of Mrs. Anne Pitt? Lady Lucy Mann, I trust, was in less danger than her husband apprehended. I have a high opinion of the sea, and am going to try its air myself, for I have not recovered my feet quite yet, and always found singular benefit from sea-breezes, which are all I shall try now, and on shore. One ought to try, though one must not imagine that strength, is to return, when one is no boy, as it used to do. I have no such impertinent presumption, and always submit with profound deference to whatever penalties years impose, or that tyrant, the gout. Age has still its comforts. They who disdain them, and insist upon pleasures, do not understand their own interest. The most grievous part of old age is the loss of old friends: they have no succedaneum. Adieu!

17th.

The Duchess of Newcastle† died this morning, aged seventy-five. She was perfectly well on Monday night, when she went to bed, was seized between two and three with an apoplexy and total loss of sense, and expired at eleven to-day. I just mention deaths of those you remember. To myself I seem Methuselah, for I can scarcely reckon twenty of those who formed *the world* when I came into it; but, indeed, as my father was Minister, I came into it at five years old. Sometimes, I think this my second life, so totally is every thing changed.

I did flatter myself with being diverted at your surprise from so general an alteration of persons, objects, manners, as you would have found; but there is an end of all that pleasing vision! I remember when my father went out of place, and was to return visits, which ministers are excused from doing, he could not guess where he was, finding himself in so many new streets and squares. This was thirty years ago. They have been building ever since, and one would think had imported two or three capitals. London could put Florence into its fob-pocket; but as they build so slightly, if they did not rebuild, it would be just the reverse of Rome, a vast circumference of city surrounding an area of ruins. As its present progress is chiefly north, and Southwark marches south, the metropolis promises to be as broad as long. Rows of houses shoot out every way like a polypus; and, so great is the rage of building every where, that, if I stay here a fortnight, without going to town, I look about to see if no new house is built since I went last. America and France must tell us how long

* Citizens ennobled at Florence are allowed to rank as nobles only at processions, till the third generation.

† Lady Henrietta Godolphin, eldest daughter of the second Earl of Godolphin, by Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough.

this exuberance of opulence is to last! The East Indies, I believe, will not contribute to it much longer. Babylon and Memphis and Rome, probably, stared at their own downfall. Empires did not use to philosophise, nor thought much but of themselves. Such revolutions are better known now, and we ought to expect them—I do not say we do. This little island will be ridiculously proud some ages hence of its former brave days, and swear its capital was once as big again as Paris, or—what is to be the name of the city that will then give laws to Europe?—perhaps New York or Philadelphia.

LETTER CCLV.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 11, 1776.

I HAVE so little to tell you, though, perhaps, at the eve of so much, that I shall, I think, only begin this letter to show you the constancy of my attention, but not send it till it is fuller.

You have seen by the public newspapers, that General Carleton has driven the provincials out of all Canada. It is well he fights better than he writes! General Conway has constantly said that he would do great service. The provincials revenge themselves on our ships, took nine Jamaica-men at once, and have just taken two transports with troops; besides half or three quarters starving our West India Islands. General Howe has left Halifax since the beginning of June, on an expedition. Nearly a fortnight ago he was heard of off New York, and great anxiety was afloat to know farther. Yesterday came letters that he had landed on an island near, without molestation, but learnt that the opposite coast was covered with a hundred cannon, behind which lay a strong army entrenched up to their eyes. This does not diminish the anxiety for the event. His brother the peer had not joined him; not that there are appearances promising negotiation. The Congress has declared all the provinces independent, has condemned the Mayor of New York to be hanged for corresponding with their enemies, and have seized Franklin, not the famous doctor, but one of the King's governors. I hope this savage kind of war will not proceed; but they seem to be very determined, and that makes the prospect very melancholy.

I have been much alarmed lately about General Conway, who, by a sudden cold, had something of a paralytic stroke in the face; but as it did not affect his speech or health, and is almost disappeared, I am much easier. He is uneasy himself, with reason, about his daughter. Her husband* and his two brothers have contracted a debt—one can scarcely expect to be believed out of England—of seventy thousand pounds! Who but must think himself happy to marry a daughter with only ten thousand pounds to a young man with five

* John Damer, eldest son of Joseph Lord Milton, married Anne, only child of General Henry Seymour Conway.

thousand pounds a-year rent-charge in present, and twenty-two thousand a-year settled? And yet this daughter at present is ruined! Her behaviour is such as her father's would be; she does not only not complain, but desires her very own jewels may be sold. The young men of this age seem to have made a law amongst themselves for declaring their fathers superannuated at fifty, and then dispose of the estates, as if already their own.

How culpable to society was Lord Holland* for setting an example of paying such enormous, such gigantic debts! Can you believe that Lord Foley's† two sons have borrowed money so extravagantly, that the interest they have contracted to pay, amounts to eighteen thousand pounds a-year? I write the sum at length, lest you should think I have mistaken, and set down two or three figures too much. The Legislature sits quiet, and says it cannot put a stop to such outrageous doing; but thus is it punished for winking at the plunder of the Indies, which cannot suffice. Our Jews and usurers continue to lounge at home, and commit as much rapine as Lord Clive!

Wednesday, 14th.

As I doubt whether we shall hear any considerable news soon, I have determined to send away this letter, lest it should be superannuated. The Gazette has already got the start of it, and told you all it pretended to tell. In truth, my letters are little more than companions of the newspapers, or at best evidences for their veracity, which *they* want. It is incredible how both sides lie about the American war. Even that laconic personage the Gazette has been known to fib, and always takes care not to tell a syllable of bad news. I live here alone, and never hear any but with all the world. Whenever this war shall end, I believe it will be very new; for except two or three great facts, I question whether we, the public, know any thing of the matter.

LETTER CCLVI.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 20, 1776.

You will have concluded, on the sight of another letter so soon, that you are to hear of a battle in America. Not so, though you are going to hear a dismal story, and, which is worse, relative to friends of mine. Indeed the newspapers will have told it to you already, and you have known the principal actor, Mr. Damer, Lord Milton's eldest son, and who married General Conway's only daughter. I think I told you in my last that he and his two brothers most unexpectedly notified to their father that they owed above seventy thousand pounds. The proud lord, for once in the right, refused to pay the debt or see

* Henry Fox, first Lord Holland.
† Thomas and Edward, sons of the first Lord Foley of that line.

them. The two eldest were to retire to France, and Mrs. Damer was to accompany them, without a murmur, and with the approbation, though to the great grief of Mr. Conway and Lady Ailesbury. She was, luckily, gone to take her leave of them, and to return to town last Friday morning. On Thursday, Mr. Damer supped at the Bedford-arms in Covent Garden, with four common women, a blind fiddler, and no other man. At three in the morning he dismissed his seraglio, bidding each receive her guinea at the bar, and ordering Orpheus to come up again in half-an-hour. When he returned, he found a dead silence, and smelt gunpowder. He called, the master of the house came up, and found Mr. Damer sitting in his chair, dead, with a pistol by him, and another in his pocket. The ball had not gone through his head, nor made any report. On the table lay a scrap of paper with these words, "The people of the house are not to blame for what has happened, which was my own act." This was the sole tribute he paid to justice and decency!

What a catastrophe for a man at thirty two, heir to two and twenty thousand a-year! We are persuaded lunacy, not distress, was the sole cause of his fate. He has often, and even at supper that night, hinted at such an exploit—the very reason why one should not expect it. His brothers have gamed—he never did. He was grave, cool, reasonable, and reserved; but passed his life as he died, with troops of women and the blind fiddler—an odd companion in such scenes! One good springs out of this evil, the leeches, the Jews and extortioners, will lose very considerably. Lord Milton, whom any thing can petrify and nothing soften, will not only not see his remaining sons, but wrecks his fury on Mrs. Damer, though she deserves only pity, and shows no resentment. He insists on selling her jewels, which are magnificent, for discharge of just debts. This is all the hurt he can do her; she must have her jointure of 2500*l.* a-year.

We have no end of these examples of extravagance. There is a Lord Coleraine and his two brothers, who have equalled the Damers. and almost the Foxes and Foleys. Their father, who died about two years ago, was apprised of their proceedings and left all he could, 1600*l.* a-year to his wife. The unnatural wretches have wheedled her out of all, and Lady Windsor has taken her into her house for subsistence! Very lately they told her she must come to town on business:—it was to show her to the Jews, and convince them hers was a good life—unless she is starved. You must not suppose that such actions are disapproved, for the second brother is going* Minister to Brussels, that he may not go to jail, whither he ought to go. I am weary of relating such histories. You shall hear no more of them, for my letters would be the annals of Bedlam. Adieu!

22nd.

Since I wrote my letter, an account is come of the total failure of the expedition under General Clinton, Lord Cornwallis, and Sir Pe-

* He did go.

ter Parker, against Charleston. The troops landed on Long Island, and then could not act. The fleet attacked a fort, were repulsed, lost a man-of-war, with a captain, lieutenant, and two hundred men, and Sir Peter Parker they say is wounded in six places. They were, besides, forced to burn a storeship. The provincials are confessed to have behaved remarkably well. This success will not discourage the rest. In what a chaos are we embarked!

LETTER CCLVII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 20, 1776.

You almost confess by your last that you have a little suspected me of having relaxed my veteran punctuality. I doubt your suspicions will have been augmented, for how can you conceive that at so critical a moment, and with so much reason to expect events, six whole weeks will have intervened to-morrow, since the letters that brought an account of General Howe being landed on Staten Island in the face of New York? The disgraceful miscarriage of Charleston has come since—but not a syllable from General Howe—not even that his brother has joined him; nor is it known what is become of Lord Howe. The public are impatient, you may be sure: in the Ministers it is more than impatience. Yet these no-events are all I could have sent you. The despair from hearing nothing does amount to the importance of an article; and when I have told you that, I have said all I know.

Sir William Hamilton is arrived, and I expect he will call on me here in a day or two. I don't know whether he passed through Florence.

You ask, what is become of the Duchess of Kingston? I have just heard of her, having met Lady Harriet Vernon,* who is returned from Paris, and saw her there at the Colisée,† with a hat and feathers like Henri Quatre. She has given orders for a palace to be taken for her in Paris. At Calais she has a guard at her door, having demanded it, on pretence that her enemies aimed at her life. She obtained it, and has detained it to this moment. Her foolish vanity, you see, will never leave her. I think your Lord Cowper is not much wiser—I should not wonder at his retaining the mob, if Florence were a borough town. It would be a sort of poetic justice,‡ if he should send his son to England, and the boy should refuse to return to him. I am sorry other climates cannot repair the eccentricities our own climate occasions.

* Youngest sister of William Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, and Lady of the Bedchamber to Princess Amelia.

† The French Ranelagh.

‡ Lord Cowper from the moment he went to travel, would not return to England, but settled at Florence, and though entreated in the most earnest manner, would not visit his father before the latter's death.

I am inclined to think you will hear good news of Lady Lucy, as she holds out so long. I heartily wish you may.

I shall reserve the rest of my paper, as my letter cannot begin its journey till the twenty-fourth, for any news that may happen to arrive in the interim. When I appear remiss, you may be certain I have nothing to tell you. Being so totally idle, it would be unpardonable to be lazy too, when you depend on my correspondence. When it has been so constant above thirty years, it shall not disgrace itself in its old age.

22nd.

The Ministers have heard by a ship which met another ship at sea, that Lord Howe has joined his brother, and that they were preparing to make the attempt on New York. This may be so, and is not improbable; but such round-about intelligence may not be true neither.

Adieu! till there is something to tell you.

LETTER CCLVIII.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 13, 1776.

I NEED not tell you what a splendid gazette has already told. As I was here before the account arrived, and heard it but imperfectly, I could not write so soon as the first post would set out with the news. The provincials have certainly not behaved up to the haughtiness with which they rejected all overtures of peace. It is said they were outwitted, deceived by feints, and drawn into ambuscade. *That* does no honour to their generals. Great consequences are expected from this victory. I am too ignorant of war, sieges, and America, to pretend to judge; and really have heard so much from both sides that has not proved true, and at the same time such pains are taken to keep people in the dark, that I have laid it down to myself to believe nothing but what is universally allowed. It is your duty to credit gazettes, and you cannot err while you stick to your Bible. The red riband is to be sent to General Howe, who seems to have acted very sensibly.

I never saw your Duke with the barbarous name—Ostrogothia;* nor am longer curious of sights. For the first summer of my life, I have stayed quietly at home; at least not been thirty miles. It has struck fifty-nine with me: which is an hour for thinking of "the great journey," though not for talking of it: in which there always seems a great deal of affectation or unwillingness. Nay, it is silly, too; for how few can one talk to about one's death, that care about it: if they do, it is unkind. My being is so *isolé* and insignificant, that I shall go out, like a lamp in an illumination that cannot be missed.

* Brother of the King of Sweden.

LETTER CCLIX.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 1, 1776.

For three weeks you have been expecting accounts from New York: so have we; and so we are still. Nothing was come this morning; but we seem to be on the eve of another interlude, that will be full as serious as the chief piece. Very few days before the Parliament was to meet, nine or ten ships of the line were put into commission; and, on Tuesday, press-warrants were issued, and every appearance spoke war. The first reports were, that Spain was going to attack Portugal; and so it looks still: and, they say, by the obstinacy of the latter.

I do not know how, but the general opinion is, that though Monsieur de Noailles* is just arrived, our preparations are made at least as much against France, as to support Portugal. Every port in France countenances these apprehensions; and our late success at Long Island does but make it probable that we shall not be suffered quietly to fetch over too many victories. The agent of the Colonies is openly countenanced at Versailles; and it is past a doubt that they are assisted and traded with. I hear this was urged yesterday, in both Houses, by the Opposition; and not denied. The King's speech you will see; and I think it gainsays but very faintly all I tell you. The Opposition made a sort of protest against all the late measures, in a kind of address, that they would have substituted for that prepared by the Court: not expecting, to be sure, to carry it, but as their declaration. As I am here, I could not learn even these particulars in time to write to you by to-night's post. Indeed, what shall pass at present in Parliament will decide nothing. Parliament has done what, I think, it will never be able to undo; and it must excuse me if I do not honour its wisdom.

What a strange event in France! Monsieur Necker, a Protestant, and actually resident, from Geneva, made one of the Controllers of the Finances! What says your neighbour, Madame of Babylon?†—but, poor old soul, she dares say nothing. Marshal Turenne's ghost will die for shame, that, with all his glory, he turned Catholic to make his Court. A little Swiss banker will be above such meanness. No, I never disapproved your de-crowning Count Albany:‡ it became you: but I certainly have the utmost contempt for the Court of Rome, that denied him a title, of which his family had forfeited all the advantages for *their* cause. I am glad they did; for it shows how insignificant both he and they are. You never did mention the *démêlé* with Lord Cowper; and I could easily excuse it.

I still think Lady Lucy has a good chance of living, by holding out

* The new Ambassador from France. † Rome.

‡ The Pretender. Sir Horace Mann had remonstrated against his being received at Rome as King of England; and the Pope complied.

so long. Thank you much for your kindness to Mr. Giles.* I shall go to town on Sunday for a day or two, and if I hear any further news you shall know.

Arlington Street, Nov. 4.

At last the confirmation is come of New York being in possession of General Howe, having been abandoned by the provincials. Three thousand men sallied out of their lines, but were repulsed by three regiments, with little loss of life on either side, but thirteen or fourteen of the King's officers were wounded. Three days after Howe was in the town it was fired by some provincials, and a quarter of it burnt before the flames could be extinguished. Howe is now encamped within four miles of the enemy's lines. I don't know whether he means to attempt to force them, or whether they mean to make their stand now, or draw him up into the country. My opinion is, that if he gains any great advantage, it will but the sooner bring on a war with France, as it is natural to suppose they will not let us ever be quiet masters of America again, nor miss the present favourable opportunity of embarrassing us so considerably. However, I have no great faith in reasonings on future events, and much less on my own reasonings of that sort. When it is so difficult to trace back events to causes, the reverse must be much more fallible.

LETTER CCLX.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 24, 1776.

I CANNOT tell you the particulars, as I am here, and have not yet learnt them; but there is another victory, a naval one, over the provincials on the Lake Champlain. They have lost their whole fleet, have burnt Crown Point, and are retired to Ticonderago, where, I think, they are besieged. You will see the particular circumstances in the papers, as soon as I could hear and tell them. General Howe, it is said, finding the lines at King's Bridge too strong, is drawing others between them and New York. Some say he is meditating or executing a diversion; at the same time there is a pretty general opinion that he is negotiating a peace.

You, perhaps, are still more inquisitive about the appearance of war in Europe. If I were an ambassador myself, I could not answer you more unsatisfactorily, which, if I spoke in a character, would be called mysteriously or enigmatically; but my reason is founded, as perhaps it is sometimes in your profession, on ignorance. The outward and visible signs are all martial. Equipment of a fleet, pressing of sailors, and the nomination of an Admiral: so much for Bellona. On the other hand, France says she has no thoughts of war, and our Ministers declare that they believe her. For her

* A neighbour of Mr. Walpole at Twickenham, by whom he had written to Sir Horace.

amusement, indeed, she makes great naval preparations, and some say, does not frown on the Americans, nor on their Resident, Silas Deane. *Nous verrons.*

If you should ask what the Opposition says,—I answer, nothing. They have abandoned Parliament, and some are gone into the country, and some to Paris: not to confer with Mr. Deane, but to see horse-races,—of which we have none here!

After so much negative information, I can tell you one event: Lord Rockingham is made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Being a little unfortunate generally in my prophecies and conjectures, I choose to foretell that he will be the most humble, sweet-tempered, generous, and profound Governor that ever that island was blessed with yet.

I forgot to say, that it is not Lord Bristol who commands the fleet, but Admiral Keppel. He is in the Opposition, but they being at leisure, he was appointed.

Arlington Street, Nov. 26.

You will see the particulars of the naval victory in the Gazette. It is not much valued here, as it is thought Carleton must return to Quebec for the winter. The idea of negotiation gains ground—that of war declines, for we hear Grimaldi, the Spanish Minister, has resigned, and he was reckoned no friend of ours; but pray, never mind what I say in the future tense, in which I have no skill at all. We know past times very imperfectly, and how should we, when few know even the present, and they who do, have good reasons for not being communicative? I have lived till I think I know nothing at all.

LETTER CCLXI.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 1, 1776.

I DON'T know who the Englishwoman is of whom you give so ridiculous a description; but it will suit thousands. I distrust my age continually, and impute to it half the contempt I feel for my countrymen and women. If I think the other half well-founded, it is by considering what must be said hereafter of the present age. What is to impress a great idea of us on posterity? In truth, what do our contemporaries of all other countries think of us? They stare at and condemn our politics and follies; and if they retain any respect for us, I doubt it is for the sense we have had. I do know, indeed, one man who still worships us, but his adoration is testified so very absurdly, as not to do us much credit. It is a Monsieur de Marchais, first Valet-de-Chambre to the King of France. He has the *Anglomanie* so strong, that he has not only read more English than French books, but if any valuable work appears in his own language, he

waits to peruse it till it is translated into English; and to be sure our translations of French are admirable things!

To do the rest of the French justice, I mean such as like us, they adopt only our egregious follies, and in particular the flower of them, horse-racing! *Le Roi Pepin*, a racer, is the horse in fashion. I suppose the next shameful practice of ours they naturalize, will be the personal scurrilities in the newspapers, especially on young and handsome women, in which we certainly are originals! Voltaire, who first brought us into fashion in France, is stark mad at his own success. Out of envy to writers of his own nation, he cried up Shakspeare; and now is distracted at the just encomiums bestowed on that first genius of the world in the new translation. He sent to the French Academy an invective that bears all the marks of passionate dotage. Mrs. Montagu* happened to be present when it was read. Suard, one of their writers, said to her, "Je crois, Madame, que vous êtes un peu fâché de ce que vous venez d'entendre." She replied, "Moi, Monsieur! point du tout! Je ne suis pas amie de Monsieur Voltaire." I shall go to town the day after to-morrow, and will add a postscript, if I hear any news.

Dec. 3rd.

I am come late, have seen no body, and must send away my letter,

* Mrs. Robinson Montagu, who wrote the defence of Shakspeare against Voltaire.

LENOX LIBRARY

Bancroft Collection.
Purchased in 1893.